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CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.,

NOVEMBER 19, 1865,

BY

MASON NOBLE.

NORTH ADAMS, MASS:
JAMES T. ROBINSON & CO., PRINTERS.
1865.

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STATEMENT.

The Report of the Committee appointed to make arrangements for the celebration of the "Centennial" herewith published, is perhaps the best introduction to the Address which could be given.

The programme laid down in the report was substantially carried out.

The Rev. Dr. Hopkins presided in the morning, and was assisted in the services by two former Pastors of the Church,—Rev. Addison Ballard and Rev. Joseph Alden, D. D.

In the afternoon, Rev. Mr. Seymour, Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, presided, and was assisted by Prof. Albert Hopkins and Rev. Calvin Durfee.

The "Conference Meeting" in the evening, was continued for two hours. In the absence of Rev. Lucius E. Smith, of the Baptist Church, Rev. Mason Noble was requested to conduct the services. Addresses were made by the Rev. Dr. Alden, Rev. Mr. Durfee, Rev. Mr. Ballard, Rev. John S. Whitman, Rev. Dr. Hopkins, S. Southworth, Esq., and Hon. Joseph White. These addresses were intermingled with prayers and singing of a very fervent and animated character, and the impression made upon the great congregation was so deep and pleasant that all seemed to regret that the time for adjournment had arrived.

In the early part of the meeting a number of letters were read, from former residents of Williamstown, regretting their necessary absence, and expressing their deep sympathy with the meeting.

It was also voted unanimously to request a copy of the "Centennial Address" for publication, and a committee of three—Henry L. Sabin, M. D., Keyes Danforth, Esq., and S. Southworth, Esq.—were appointed for that purpose.

On motion of Prof. Perry, it was also resolved that the same committee request the Hon. Joseph White to furnish the facts of his address for publication; and also to prepare any other proceedings of this meeting for publication, which they might select for such a purpose.

In accordance with this resolution, the letters from some of our absent friends, and the remarks of Hon. Joseph White, will be found in the Appendix.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE.

The Committee appointed at a meeting held in the Lecture Room, July 26, 1865, to make arrangements for the celebration of the settlement of our Town, and the ordination of the first Pastor, have the honor to announce

That they immediately entered into a correspondence with the Rev. Mason Noble, Chaplain of the U. S. Naval Academy, requesting him to deliver a Centennial Address in this Town at some time during the present autumn, and that Mr. Noble consented to deliver such an Address at such time as the Committee might designate.

In the examination of the ancient records of the Town, it was ascertained that though the call to Mr. Whitman Welch to the work of the ministry in this Town was given on the 23th of July, 1765, yet it was not till October 22d, of the same year,—exactly one hundred years this day*—that Richard Stratton, Josiah Hosford and William Hosford were appointed a committee "to prepare for the ordination." Owing to the loss of the early Church Records by fire, the exact date of the ordination cannot be known. But from a call for a Town Meeting dated December 30, 1765, to make arrangements to pay the expenses incurred by the Committee in the ordination, there is no doubt that the ordination did take place on some day between the 22d of October and the 30th of December, and most probably in the month of November.

The committee have therefore determined to celebrate the centennial in that month, and do hereby designate the 15th of November, which is the third Sabbath of that month as the time for the celebration. As the period of an entire century is to be reviewed on this occasion it is understood that the Address will occupy the attention of the people at both the morning and afternoon exercises of that day.

The Faculty and students of the College, the 2d Congregational church, the Pastor and congregation of the Methodist Episcopal church, the members of the Baptist church and the former Pastors of this church who are still living will be invited to be present and participate in the celebration. The President of the college, assisted by our last Pastor, Rev. Addison Ballard, will be requested to preside and conduct the devotional services in the morning, and the Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal church, assisted by other clergymen to do the same in the afternoon.

In the evening at 7 o'clock there will be a "Conference Meeting" after the manner of the "olden time." The Rev. Lucius E. Smith, of Groton, Mass., assisted by Prof. Albert Hopkins, will be requested to preside at this meeting, and the time will be spent in prayer and singing, and in volunteer addresses of not over ten minutes from citizens and strangers.

All which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY L. SABIN,
KEYES DANFORTH,
JAMES SMEDLEY,
} Committee.

Williamstown, October 22d, 1865.

* This report was read from the pulpit in the 1st Congregational church on Sabbath Day, Oct. 22, 1865.

Source unknown

DISCOURSE.

AND HE BARE THEM AND CARRIED THEM ALL THE DAYS OF OLD.—Isaiah 63 : 9.

As I stand before you to-day I feel very deeply that we are all one family, and that I may claim the privilege and the honor of a son and a brother. I was born in this household. I was baptized at this altar. I was trained in your district school, and educated at the college. At seventeen years of age, in company with many others, and with some of you who are now present, I publicly confessed Christ in this house and sat down for the first time at the table of the Lord. Just after I had passed my majority I was licensed to preach by the Berkshire Association, and the year following was ordained in this Pulpit and sent forth as an Evangelist to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ. And now after thirty-four years of absence, nearly twenty of which I have been a Pastor in the city of Washington and in New York, and twelve a Chaplain in our Navy—after having sailed more miles upon the seas than would encircle the earth, and touched with my feet the four quarters of the globe, and looked in upon the homes of most of the great races of the human family—I come back again with real pleasure to my own first and dearest home. These grand old mountains stand before me in the same sublime repose with which they awed and yet attracted my childhood. The pleasant pastures on the hills, and the meadows down by the river, and the clear bright brooks that find their way along the vallies are the same as I left them. And though when I look around for the companions of my youth I find that most of them have gone, and that the majority of them have indeed joined our older fathers and mothers in the sleep of the

grave; and though the memories of the past become thus in some respects as sad as they are sacred, yet I am glad to know that so many have, through the love and grace of God, passed away to a better home. They are not dead. They are living still. And here too instead of the fathers are the children and the children's children; and in all these old homes are the same young joys and bright hopes that made life so pleasant in the past. Amid all the changes there is more that remains unchanged. God and truth and duty and social life and human nature and man's Great Saviour are the same. And though we come together to remember the past I cannot but remember that the past was so much like the present, while the present is like the past.

A few days after receiving the invitation to address you on this occasion I was walking on the cliffs at Newport, looking out upon the sea, and thinking of you and the past. It was a quiet summer day and the great waters lay before me in all their glory. They came rolling on in resistless power, now rising and swelling into majestic billows which sweeping over the distant rocks left them shining in their white spray, and then hurrying on toward the shore they lifted up their crests of foam in long lines of beauty and breaking into countless gems scattered all their treasures upon the sands. But though they reached the shore they did not find a resting place. They seemed tied by invisible bands to all that they had left behind them; and yielding to their power they returned to the sea only to be swept back again with the rising tide. Though the depth and strength of the waters were ever changing with the hours, yet the great waves continued the same. And it was this idea of immutability in the midst of ceaseless change, of immortal youth and vigor enthroned upon the billows as they roll on through the ages, that chiefly occupied my thoughts. The waters were as clear and pure as when first poured forth from the hands of their Creator. Their movements were as full of majesty and power. Their white foam flashed as brightly in the sun, and their voice was as solemn and sublime. The whole scene before me did not differ from that on which the Red Naragansett looked as he stood there three centuries before leaning upon his strong bow and gazing upon the wonders of the deep. It was the same as that which led the author of the oldest Book more than four thousand

years ago to exclaim, "Who shut up the sea? and set bars and doors, and said hitherto shalt thou come, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

I love to think of the stability of the universe, and of the unchanging youth and freshness of nature around us. And as we come up to these heights to-day and look out upon the great ocean of the past, I love to remember that our race has ever been substantially the same in all the changes through which they have passed.

I am aware that there are those who look upon the past of our race as full of darkness. To them the shadows are ever deepening as they go backward, till as they approach the origin of man they find him in the degradation of a savage and scarcely elevated above the beasts that perish. From this low point they tell us that man has been slowly working his way up to his present position, his powers having been gradually developed, while his progress in the future is secured only by the same stern laws that have controlled him in the ages that are gone.

Now while there are some facts which may seem to countenance such a theory, there are many more which accord with the Bible in its declaration that man was made in the image of God, that his character at first was perfect, and that the race commenced their career on earth in the full development of all their powers. The golden age was not a pleasant fable. The fall of man from his original uprightness was not a sudden plunge into the depths of savage ignorance and ferocity. On the contrary, nothing is more certain than the revelation of a gracious Deliverer to man at the very commencement of his sins and sorrows; and as soon as the race began to spread themselves over the earth, they are ever accompanied by the most signal manifestation of the loving kindness of their Creator. The nearer we come in our investigations to the primitive ages and the more exact our knowledge, the more evidence do we find that in Asia on the Tigris and the Euphrates, and in Africa on the Nile, there were races of men equal and in some respects superior to ourselves. In the Palaces of Ninevah and Babylon as revealed to our eyes by Layard and others, and in the Temples of Luxor and Carnac, and in the pyamids and tombs of Egypt are specimens of art, of taste, of skill and power which proclaim that the races that constructed them were as mighty as our slanders of their barbarism are baseless.

Barbarism has indeed swept over many tribes and nations. But it ever came as a judgment of God. It was in accordance with both natural and moral law. Men gradually sank down into the debasements which have so long characterised some of the nations of the East; while the tribes scattered in the more inaccessible parts of the earth, and exposed to the powerful influences of climate and of war, and of false government have reached at times a terrible depth of savage degradation. Still, barbarism has ever been exceptional and limited; not normal or universal. Man's higher nature has ever been asserting itself. The great waves as they have rolled on from age to age have been bound to all the past and to a redeeming God; and though at times shrouded in thick darkness and lashed by the fury of the storm, have yet returned to their place, lifting themselves up toward the sky and spreading out in solemn beauty under the light.

It is with such reverence for the past in general, and with an assured confidence in the comparative wisdom and goodness of our own immediate ancestors in particular, that I enter into the pleasant memories and unite in the congratulations of this day.

A century has passed since our fathers first stood among these hills and began to build their homes in the forests that then thickly shaded these vallies. We gather here to-day to look back over these years, and to revive in some measure the scenes that have been witnessed.

The principal subject which invites our attention is *the history and character of the fathers of our town.*

We are not afraid to ask the question *who and what were they?* For they were the children of the Pilgrim Fathers. In some of them was the blood of those who landed on the rock at Plymouth more than a century before; and the rest were the descendants of those who followed the first Pilgrims in exile from the father land.

During the century preceding the settlement of Berkshire the coast of New England had been studded with their towns and adorned with their school houses and churches. The forests had gradually fallen before them, and villages had sprung up in the interior as far as the valley of the Connecticut. But here the tide of emigration westward was arrested for many years. The tribes of Indians were too formidable and their union with the

hostile French too close to permit our Fathers to place themselves beyond the rough hills that separated them from the Hoosic and the Housatonic. As late as 1735 there was but one house between Westfield in Hampden Co. and Sheffield in this county. In Sheffield was the first settlement in Berkshire, and it consisted chiefly of emigrants from Westfield. And it is an interesting fact to me personally that a Mr. Noble from Westfield, is recorded in the history of Sheffield as "the first white man who resided in the town. He spent the first winter there with no other human being than the Indians. In the spring he went back to Westfield and in June returned with his daughter." This we suppose was in 1725. The settlements on the Housatonic extended gradually northward, reaching Great Barrington which was then a part of Sheffield in 1730; Stockbridge between 1735 and 1740; Lenox in 1750; Pittsfield in 1752; and Williamstown in 1753.

The Legislative provision by which the first settlers of this town became proprietors of the soil was enacted April 6, 1750. By this law a committee was appointed to lay out 63 house lots of ten or twelve acres each in the township of West Hoosic. They were then to admit sixty settlers,—each settler to be entitled to one sixty-third part of the township on condition of paying six pounds, thirteen shillings and six pence within two years, building a house 18 feet long, by 15 wide and seven stud, fencing five acres and bringing it to grass or fit for ploughing, and actually by themselves or heirs residing five years in seven from the time of their being admitted. Each house lot was then permitted to draw one sixty-third part of the township. Three of the sixty-third parts of the township were by the law reserved —one for the first settled minister; one for the ministry, i. e., his salary; and one for the school "as near the centre of the town as may be with convenience." And all this had another indispensable condition—"that they do settle a learned orthodox minister in said town within the term of five years of their being admitted."

The first meeting of the "Proprietors" of Williamstown was held December 5, 1753, by virtue of a warrant of Wm. Williams, Esq., of Pittsfield, issued in pursuance of a vote of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, September 7, 1753.

Two years previous Nehemiah Smedley and William and

Josiah Hosford and some other young men had come here to prepare a settlement for themselves and their families. Being however interrupted in their plans by the increasing hostility of the Indians, they returned to Connecticut, and then enlisting in a company raised to protect the frontiers they came again with others to this place and garrisoned a fort which stood a few rods northwest of this house, and also a block house near the West College. The few inhabitants were exposed to frequent incursions from the Indians; and in July, 1756, Capt. Chapin and two persons by the name of Chidestree are said to have been killed, while several persons were carried off into captivity.

Connected with these defences of the town at that time we cannot forget Fort Massachusetts, situated three miles and a half east of this church not far from the north bank of the Hoosic. This fort was built in 1741 or in 1742, and was the scene of many a bloody strife in those early days. Capt., afterwards Col. Ephraim Williams was stationed there as commander in 1748, and it was in such circumstances that he made the acquaintance of our struggling fathers and formed those attachments to the people and the town that in a few years through his noble legacy changed the name of West Hoosic into Williamstown, and wreathed his own brow with the pure and ever increasing glories of Williams College.

For a period of four years from 1756 to 1760 I find no record of the fortunes of the small number who were here battling with the terrors of a wilderness through which the savages roamed every year on their war path. Their number however gradually increased, and though exposed to so many trials their chief anxieties seem to be connected with their spiritual interests. In this connection and as illustrating the real character of the men, I will read to you some extracts from the early records of the town.

The second meeting of the Proprietors was called by the Proprietor's clerk, Isaac Wyman, and dated Fort Massachusetts, April 5th, 1754. The place of meeting was to be in West Hoosic at the dwelling house of Capt. Allen Curtis; and among other items of business they were "to see if the Proprietors will have the gospel preached in this town this summer or some part of it; and if so to choose a committee to bring in some orthodox minister to preach the gospel."

"Oct. 1, 1760, Voted to hire preaching for six months begin-

ning the 1st of May next, and to raise twelve shillings on each right to defray the expense."

"Nov. 20, 1760, A meeting was called to see if the town would choose a committee to hire a good orthodox Preacher, and to see if the Proprietors would raise more money to defray the charges which are likely to arise."

"Dec. 16, 1760, The town voted to choose Thomas Train and Gideon Warren a committee to hire a good orthodox Preacher for the Proprietors, and to raise a tax of eight shillings on each Proprietor's right, to defray the necessary charge."

"Sept. 24, 1761, Voted that Gideon Warren's account of two pounds and five shillings, and Thomas Train's account of twelve shillings be accepted for going after a minister." At the same meeting "Josiah Hosford and Samuel Kellogg were appointed a committee to hire a good orthodox Preacher."

The next year the town voted at a meeting held March 29, 1762, not to raise money to hire preaching. But

"March 10, 1763, It was voted to have preaching for the future, and that Thomas Dunton, Asa Johnson and Samuel Kellogg be a committee to provide a minister. Also to raise twelve shillings on each Proprietor's right to defray the expense of preaching. They also chose a committee consisting of Jonathan Meacham and Samuel Kellogg to reason with the Treasurer." There seems to have been some conflict in authority between the settlers and the original Proprietors, and this probably explains the vote of the previous year refusing to raise money for preaching.

"Nov. 16, 1763, Voted to give Mr. Warner a call to preach on probation, and chose Nehemiah Smedley, Benjamin Simonds and Derrick Webb a commitee to treat with Mr. Warren or provide another minister if need be."

"March 28, 1764, Voted to raise nine shillings on each Proprietor's right for preaching."

"Sept. 7, 1764, Voted to choose Jonathan Meacham and Samuel Kellogg a committee to provide a minister for the Proprietors."

"Dec. 3, 1764, Voted not to hire Mr. Strickland on probation."

"March 26, 1765, Voted to raise nine shillings of money on each Proprietor's right to support the gospel."

These votes so often repeated do in fact constitute one great

item of business till in July, 1765, "Mr. Whitman Welch was called to the work of the ministry in this town."

While the call to Mr. Welch was thus given in July, his ordination did not take place till late in the following autumn. The exact date is unknown owing to the loss by fire of the early records of the church. But in the records of the town we find that on October 22d, "Richard Stratton and Josiah and William Hosford were appointed a committee to prepare for the ordination." In the month of December a town meeting was called to defray the expenses incurred at the ordination. So that the ordination itself must have taken place between these two dates and probably in the month of November. On this account it was thought best to appoint this time for the celebration of the centennial.

It would be very pleasant if we could lift the veil from the scenes of this eventful day in the history of our town. There are some facts which may aid us a little in this respect. The Congregational Church in Lanesborough was formed in March the preceding year by Rev. Samuel Hopkins of Great Barrington, and the Rev. Stephen West of Stockbridge. The Rev. Daniel Collins was ordained in Lanesborough three weeks later, the 17th of April, 1764, and the Rev. Thomas Allen was ordained in Pontoosuc (now Pitttsfield,) the day following. These four men, so closely and sacredly united, and constituting a majority of the Pastors in this region were doubtless the principal actors in this scene. There were here at the time only the primitive log houses. There was no church edifice, and the school house where the infant church had been in the habit of meeting for public worship stood where the Mansion House now stands. There doubtless these ministers of God, went in their large three cornered hats, and their small clothes and silver shoe buckles and bands and gown, and laid their hands so reverently upon the head of the young Pastor, and invoked that presence and blessing of the Lord which have continued here for the century that is gone.

We learn from the town records that the "settlement" of the Pastor was "eighty pounds, to be paid one half the first year, and the other half the year following." His "salary" was to be forty pounds, and to be "increased three pounds annually till it should amount to seventy pounds. He was also to "have the use of the ministry house lot." The house in which he did in fact

live, was the one afterwards occupied for so many years by the Harrison family, and is now owned and occupied by Mr. Daniel Stevens. The old pine tree which was then planted still stands in the front door-yard,—though it is no longer a symbol as in those times of the minister's home.

Mr. Welch was a graduate of Yale College in 1762. He is said to have been a man of intelligence, and very social in his habits. He was an animated Preacher and attentive to the duties of his office. In the first year of the American Revolution, and after a Pastorate of nearly 12 years, he became a chaplain in a regiment to which a company belonged commanded by Lieut. Zebediah Sabin of this town. That winter he marched with the American Army to Canada, where both he and Lieut., then Captain Sabin, and many others of our townsmen, laid down their lives in the service of their country.

Baptised as we all have been in the blood of this second, and still more glorious war of independence, which has just closed so triumphantly, it is not unpleasant to remember to-day that the first Pastor of the beloved church of our fathers and the grandfather of Dr. Henry L. Sabin, now the oldest living Deacon, so perfectly identified themselves with that heroic struggle,—the Pastor going forth by the side of his Lieutenant and other members of his own flock, to defend the liberties of the land. A few years later, at the time of the Battle of Bennington, it is said that every man in this town, except a cripple on crutches, shouldered his gun and rushed to the field of conflict,—while the cripple went from house to house in the settlement encouraging the women who could hear distinctly the booming of the guns during the anxious hours.

In the year of Mr. Welch's ordination, and of the incorporation of the town, there were some sixty or more settlers here. In 1770, there were about seventy families or parts of families. I will give you their names as I find them recorded:—

Capt. Nehemiah Smedley,
William Hosford,
Josiah Hosford,
Col. B. Simonds,
Seth Hudson,
Richard Stratton,
Jonathan Meacham,
James Meacham,
Thomas Train,
Thomas Dunton,
Wilson Webb,
David Webb,
Seth Lewis,
David Nichols,
Stephen Davis,
Titus Harrison,
Isaac Ovitt,
Josiah Wright,
Jesse Ryan,
Samuel Birchard,
Joseph Wheeler,
Ada Johnson,
Robert Hawkins,
Derrick Smith,

Elkanah Paris,
Capt. Isaac Searle,
John Newbury,
Elisha Higgins,
Dea. Nathan Wheeler,
M[illegible]. Seeley,
Elisha Baker & Son,
William Hine,
Moses Rich,
Bartholomew Woodcock,
Nehemiah Woodcock,
David Johnson,
Samuel Sloane,
Alexander Sloane,
Thomas Roe,
Ichabod Southwick,
John Torrey,
William Torrey,
Capt. Samuel Clark,
Moses Young,
Andrew Young,
Joseph Talmadge,
Elisha Higgins,
Stephen Olmstead,
Nathan Smith,
Isaac Stratton,
Daniel Burbank,
Robert McMaster,
John McMaster,
William Young,
Jedediah Sabin,
David Johnson, 2d,
Asa Corben,
Amasa Corbin,
Joseph Corben,
Samuel Mills,
Jonathan Sherwood,
Samuel Sherwood,
Isaac Sherwood,
——— Deming,
Lieut. Sampson Howe.

I have said that these men were the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers. It is not however a fact that they all came from either Central or Eastern Massachusetts,—many of them were from that portion of Connecticut which lies immediately south of Berkshire county. They were all, however, of the same original Puritan stock; entertaining the same strong views of religious truth and of civil liberty; uniting habits of industry, frugality and a stern morality with a true appreciation of solid learning in their teachers and of general intelligence among the people. As they set up their church and their school-house in the very centre of their settlement, and laid out their farms on every side of this centre, so it is no exaggeration to say that their remarkable wisdom and energy in laying foundations of temporal prosperity were inspired by and rendered subservient to the great central idea of establishing the kingdom of God among men, and securing for themselves the blessings of that "ETERNITY," which was a great word, and a most vivid reality to their minds. And it is in this connection that I wish to consider a little more particularly *what our Fathers were.*

I confess that I feel a much deeper interest in this subject than in their original and general history. As I see them leaving their former homes, and arriving here among these wild hills; as the dense woods are gradually opened to the sunlight, and the virgin soil rewards with its treasures their first years of labor, I love to remember that they were not *mere* laborers, and that material interests and physical comfort were not their first object. They were, some of them, eminently spiritual men, and all belonged to the most remarkable race that had been found on the

earth for many ages, and they lived in the midst of those peculiar influences which created the American nation.

It has been said that "God sifted three nations" to secure the seed which He planted in our American soil. The Huguenots of France, the Dutch Colonists of Holland, and the Puritans of England were certainly, in their day, "the salt of the earth, and the light of the world." Though the great majority of them were of the common people, yet it should never be forgotten that they were not the "Peasants" of Europe, but in their intelligence and character, far above the masses.

A modern writer, Thackeray, in his lectures on the Georges, says, "As one views Europe in the early part of the last century, the landscape is awful,—wretched cities beggarly and plundered; half burned cottages, and trembling peasants gathering piteous harvests; gangs of such tramping along with bayonets behind them." "Near the city, shut out by woods from the beggared country, the enormous, hideous, gilded, monstrous Palace where the Prince is, and the Court, and the trim gardens, and huge fountains. If you can see out of the Palace windows beyond the trim-cut forest vistas, misery is lying outside, hunger is stalking about, the bare villagers listlessly following precarious husbandry; ploughing stony fields with starved cattle, or fearfully taking in scanty harvests. Round all the royal splendor lies a nation enslaved and ruined; there are people robbed of their rights; communities laid waste; faith, justice, commerce trampled upon and well nigh destroyed." "In the first half of the last century this is going on all Europe over."

Now, while such was the condition of the people "all Europe over," a kind Providence had rescued our Fathers from the terrible degradation. From 1620, when the Mayflower landed its precious freight of freemen at Plymouth, till the latter part of the century, the Puritans were quietly leaving England and finding a refuge in this western world. As they were at home the very choicest of the people in intelligence, in morals, and in enterprise, so here they were placed in the midst of the most propitious influences for the formation of the highest possible character. Before the law they were all equal. They in fact chose their own Rulers and made their own laws. In Religion they had a Church without a Bishop, as they had a State without a King. In learning there were no exclusive privileges, and no degraded castes or

classes. The common school and the common church stood side by side, and it was considered not simply the privilege but the duty of all to share equally in their benefits. The climate was rigorous, and the soil was stubborn, and the Indians were treacherous, and their life was full of care and toil. But they shrunk not from their responsibilities in effeminancy or in fear. They were diligent and frugal and thrifty and heroic. The old forests rang with the blows of their sharp axes, and fruitful fields soon surrounded their simple homes. They increased in numbers gradually, and all their institutions of learning and liberty as well as of religion were strengthened and perfected.

Near the close of their first century, according to the London Magazine of May, 1755, and when our Fathers were beginning to emigrate to this county, there were a little over 200,000 people in Massachusetts, 100,000 in Connecticut, and 30,000 in New Hampshire and Rhode Island respectively. There were also 100,000 in New York, 60,000 in New Jersey, and 250,000 in Pennsylvania. In all the Southern Colonies there were also 250,000—making a little over a million in all.

At the opening of their second century in this land—that is from 1730 to 1760—there were new and mightier influences working all around our Fathers; and we shall fail to appreciate the character of those who founded our town, if we forget the times in which they lived.

There were the two French wars—the first continuing from 1744 to 1748, and the second from 1754 to 1760. In both of these fearful struggles with the French and Indians our Fathers were personally engaged; and in the second, Col. Ephraim Williams lost his life. There was not a home in all this valley which the tidings of French cruelties and horrible Indian massacres did not darken, while there was not an individual who was not thrilled by the capture of Louisburg, and the final victory of the young Washington at fort DuQuesne (now Pittsburgh,) and the consequent possession of the Ohio Valley and the entire line of forts from the Mississippi to Detroit and the lakes, and at last, a short time before the ordination of our first Pastor, the victory of Wolfe on the plains of Abraham and the subjection of all the French possessions in the North to the British crown.

During all these years the cloud of war hung so portentously over all this region and burst sometimes with such fury upon our

Fathers that every thing seemed ready to perish. From 1754 to 1760 there is an entire blank in the Records of the town and we are left to fill it up with deserted homes and burning houses,—those who had come for peaceful toil being turned into soldiers struggling for their personal existence and the life of the colonies as dependencies of a Protestant Power.

But while as subjects of Great Britain and unyielding Protestants they felt identified with all these struggles, and rejoiced in these magnificent triumphs over Roman Catholic France, they were not prepared to surrender their own rights which they had enjoyed in this land as a most sacred inheritance derived from their Fathers. Hence after they came forth from this protracted contest, they *were* prepared to enter into that new and strange conflict which the British Government so unexpectedly forced upon them.

If then the first settlers of this town lived and labored in the midst of the perils of French and Indian wars, they also, as well as their immediate successors, must have felt all the excitements which preceded and created the Revolutionary War.

In 1760, a Royalist wrote from Connecticut to the Archbishop of Canterbury, "Connecticut is little more than a mere Democracy; most of them upon a level, and each man thinking himself an able divine and politician. The people are rampant in their high notions of liberty." This was a true witness; and he describes very exactly those men who came to this valley. The spirit which animated them had many representative men whose names have since become immortal. There was, for instance, the young and bold John Adams. At that time he was "Master of the town school at Worcester, and meditating to become a Preacher." He is described as one who "loved the shady thickets and gloomy groves," and as saying, "a few people came over into this new world for conscience sake, and in another century will become more numerous than England itself. All Europe will not be able to subdue us." There was also James Otis of West Barnstable, and afterwards of Boston, who said, "I am determined to sacrifice estate, health, applause, and even life itself, to the sacred calls of my country."

These young men spoke out the secret and strong sentiments of the universal heart; and it was such patriotic fervour that burned in the bosoms of our own Fathers as they toiled here in

the construction of their new homes. And we may imagine, though we cannot describe the intense indignation at the Stamp Act which was passed in this memorable year 1765, and the excitement on this topic which must have mingled with the ceremonies of the ordination of our first Pastor.

But there were representative men in religion as well as in patriotism in those days. The land was indeed full of learned and sound religious teachers—of men who, while they were themselves the product of the open Bible and of unrestricted religious freedom everywhere enjoyed, stood up in the presence of congregations eager for the truth, and capable of appreciating the most vigorous reasoning on the most sublime doctrines of revelation. Can we forget to-day, that when the first settlers of this town came over the hills that separate us from the Connecticut river, or wound their way up along the valley of the Housatonic, the great Jonathan Edwards had just left the scene of his most wonderful ministry in Northampton, and was already seated in his little study with its bare floor, in this county, thinking his wise and holy thoughts, and preparing, among other immortal works, his treatise on the freedom of the will? Can we fail to remember, also, that Dr. Samuel Hopkins began his ministry in this county in 1743, and continued here 26 years, several years after the organization of this church by himself and others; and that his system of theology was for some years a text book in this College, and has in fact given tone and strength to the best religious thinking of New England for the last century? If there were time I might mention other great and memorable names as illustrations of the religious sentiments and character of our fathers. Suffice it to say that the whole Bible as the rule of faith, and christian doctrine scientifically stated by teachers of the clearest minds and the warmest and most devout hearts, was the spiritual food in which the people most delighted.

But it is our purpose not only to consider, this day, the character of those who first settled the town, but also to pass in brief review the history of the succeeding generations, and look at some of the results which have been here accomplished.

I have not been able to discover from any written records the exact date in which the different families arrived here after the ordination of Mr. Welch. Among the earliest of them was, however, my grandfather, David Noble, who planted himself imme-

diately on the banks of the Hoosic, in a house which stood on the spot where the new factory company are now erecting their principal dwelling house. He was a graduate of Yale College, and a lawyer by profession. He soon removed to the main street, where he lived for many years, and finally died in 1803, in the old brick mansion now owned and occupied by Mr. John Cole. He was one of the original Trustees of Williams College, and a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. His name and that of his wife are found in the list of the 63 members of the church who united in the call to Rev. Seth Swift to become their Pastor in 1779, three years after the death of Mr. Welch; and he was one of a committee of three to present the call to the Pastor-elect.

Another of those early settlers was the son-in-law of my grandfather, Daniel Dewey, also a lawyer, and who subsequently became a Judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, and was very eminent for his legal knowledge and intellectual power.

Another man of distinction at that time was Thompson I. Skinner, the Treasurer of the Commonwealth.

Another man who should not be forgotten, was Capt. Jonathan Danforth, the honored grandfather of our fellow-citizen, Keyes Danforth, Esq. He was actively engaged in the battle of Bunker Hill, with his eldest son, Joshua, who soon afterwards became Aid to General Washington, and fought through the Revolution, leaving the army at the close of the war with the rank of Colonel. Not long after the battle of Bunker Hill, the father emigrated with the other members of his family to this town, and it was he who headed the company of our townsmen who rushed to the Bennington battle. In that battle he is said to have "acted a conspicuous part as commander of a battalion."

In the medical profession also, there was one man, Dr. William Towner, whose fame as a physician extended to the Capitol of our State, and whose early death excited the profoundest regret among all classes.

In Barber's Historical Collection of Massachusetts, there is an imperfect list of those who arrived here between 1770 and 1800. The names are the Bulkleys, Bridges, Chamberlain, Day, Judd, Northam, Skinner, Tyler, Judah and Elisha Williams, and the Wolcotts. They came most of them from Colchester, Conn.

These were all old men when I was a boy; but their features, their forms, and their manners are indelibly impressed on my

memory. I thought little then of what they and their predecessors had done to create their pleasant homes; but to-day, with my own experience of life, I turn and look back with the deepest interest to their early struggles after they had selected their homes on the high hills and in the deep and narrow vallies of the town. Beginning with my grandfather, Charles Bulkley, on the high bleak ridge just this side of South Williamstown village, where afterwards Gershom Bulkley lived so many years, we may follow them down the old road to the banks of Green river by the Judds and the Kriggers and the Williams and the Blairs and the Days and the Harrisons, while the Bridges and the Northams pass over the Hoosic, the Chamberlains and the Tylers going up to the very summit of Northwest Hill, the Fords cultivating the base of that hill, and the Wolcotts planting themselves nearer the fort and the growing village. The Wolcotts passed away, and Col. Tyler came down from Northwest Hill and spent his last years in their old red mansion. But now the house itself is gone, the old road leading by it is turned into the valley, and as I tried to discover the site of the home of these two generations, every vestige of the past was gone, and I found only a ploughed field.

This last emigration we may suppose found the better portions of the land already taken up by the first settlers. The Smedleys and Meachams and Kelloggs and Simonds and Sloanes and Nobles in the north, and the Barbanks and Woodcocks, and Torreys and Youngs and Sabins and Sherwoods and Demings and Johnsons in the south, were already reaping rich harvests on every side.

I am aware that the younger portion of my audience may not feel any special interest in some of these names. But to those of my own age and older, there are a thousand thrilling associations connected with them, and the dead past is thus filled to us with life and beauty. We see also the hills and the pleasant farms as they were once occupied on the east by the Kelloggs and the Footes and Pauls and Blackintons and Wells, and on the west and southwest by the Danforths and Talmadges and Hoxies and Hickoxes and Prindles. And the interest does not diminish as we come into this village and pass up and down the principal street, and mingle once more in imagination with those who were once seen here in their various occupations. Here were the Putnams,

the son and grandsons of the old revolutionary hero, and the Starkweathers and the Whitmans engaged in successful trade, and Dr. Samuel Porter, whose knowledge of medicine and skill in surgery placed him at the head of his important profession; and Eli Porter, who mended our watches and regulated our time; and Royal L. Porter, who established the "American Traveler," a newspaper that still survives in Boston, and though he died so young, had made himself one of the leading editors in our State Capitol. And here in the most beautiful house in town, was General Sloane; and after him his son, Douglass W. Sloane, Esq., surrounded by his family of accomplished daughters. As we pass down the hill we come to the residence of Judge Daniel Dewey, which after his death in 1813, was occupied for many years by his son, Charles A. Dewey, Esq., who has since been invested with the same judicial robes which sat so gracefully on his father before him, and which the son continues to wear in the full strength of his powers. When he left us for his new home in Northampton, his younger brother, Daniel N. Dewey, Esq., succeeded him here in the profession of law; and after filling the important offices of Trustee and Treasurer of the College, and Judge of the Probate Court of Berkshire County, and for many years proving his excellence as a christian by the purity of his life and the generous spirit with which he sustained the institutions of religion, died at the early age of 54—greatly regretted—his loss to the church and the town being still deeply felt among us. His son, Daniel Dewey, Esq., also a lawyer, now occupies the old home and is rapidly assuming the responsibilities of the father and grandfather. Near him was Gershom T. Bulkley, Esq., the merchant, the Postmaster, and the Town Clerk, who proclaimed with a trembling and yet distinct voice to the breathless congregation just assembled for worship on Sabbath morning, that "Marriage was intended between Mr. A. B. of C., and Miss E. F. of Williamstown." And on the opposite side of the street was Solomon Bulkley, Esq., the Sheriff, whose quiet and silence of speech were proverbial and from whose ceaseless and stealthy activity no victim of the law could ever escape.

There was also the Hon. Daniel Noble, in the full tide of success in his profession of the law, so devoted to the interests of Williams College, defending it before the Legislature and originating and rendering successful those important measures which

prevented the removal of the College to another locality. How elegant his home, and how full of dignity his bearing, and how sudden and overwhelming his early death. Blighting some of the fairest prospects for himself and his children not yet arrived at maturity. He had been for many years a member of this church, and in the winter preceding his death, by his exhortations and prayers in the conference room, left a very deep impression upon many that the Great Head of the church was preparing him in His own loving way for the solemn change. His three surviving sons are Rev. Edward W. Noble, for many years past a faithful and successful Pastor of a Congregational Church in Truro, Mass.; Soloman B. Noble, Esq., a lawyer of fine abilities in the city of New York, and William H. Noble, a civil engineer in Wisconsin.

Adjoining his home was that of Dr. Samuel Smith, who went day and night singing over these hills, and carrying light and joy into so many darkened households. He has left two sons, Dr. Albert W. Smith, of Castleton, Vt., and Dr. A. Murray Smith, who occupies the old homestead, and has the honor of practicing his profession among the children of his father's patients.

And Amasa Shattuck with his seven sons—all still living, and the oldest yet toiling in the same shop where the people went in the olden time for their nicest cabinet furniture and at long intervals for the coffin which should inclose their dead.

And Deacon Noble with his seven sons also, two of whom found early graves, while the remaining five yet survive—one the Hon. Charles Noble, a lawyer, and once holding the position of a State Judge; another, the Hon. David A. Noble, also a lawyer and a member of the U. S. Congress; and two others, Daniel and William A. Noble, successful merchants and useful christian men—all in Michigan, the State of their adoption.

And Christopher Penniman, with his intelligent and zealous wife ever laboring for the kingdom of God.

And Bissell Sherman, who was thought by us boys to have gone to the end of the rainbow and seized there the bag of gold which was hidden so closely in the chest at home.

And Samuel Duncan, whose diligence in his work was equalled only by his wonderful mechanical skill, and whose only surviving son, Dr. Samuel Duncan, is now an honored physician among us.

At a somewhat later date there lived in the same street John

Wright the merchant, and Samuel G. Noyes the hatter, and Homer Bartlett the lawyer, and Ebenezer Emmons the physician and Professor of natural history, and Ridley Bannister the Publisher and Editor of the "American Advocate," the weekly newspaper which was the joy and pride of our town for several years. And later still came Major Lyman Hubbell, who had spent a long life in the incessant toils of his large and successful business as a merchant in "Southpart," and Gurdon Bulkley of "Stonehill," who retired from the labors of his farm and spent his last years in such zealous endeavors to lead sinful men to the Saviour. And can we close this list of well-remembered men better than with the honored name of Stephen Hosford, the merchant, who was also for so many years our Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace?

Now while the character and fortunes of these men may have been quite different, we cannot forget that they were all engaged, in their various spheres of life, in the great work of turning this wilderness into a fruitful field. While some were busy in cutting down the forests, in subduing the soil, in constructing roads, in building bridges, in erecting houses for their families, and schools and church, they all found themselves in "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; and they built goodly houses and dwelt therein; and when their flocks and their herds multiplied their hearts were not lifted up, neither did they forget the Lord their God. They remembered that it was He that gave them power to get wealth that He might establish his covenant which he swore unto their fathers."

And it was under the influence of such principles that schools were so soon established and cherished in each of the districts of the township; that with the aid of the noble legacy of Col. Williams the Grammar school began its vigorous life, and afterwards, under President Fitch, grew into the College. There were doubtless narrow minded men and croakers among them as there always have been in every generation. But their selfishness was swept away by the high and generous spirit of the majority. And it should never be forgotten that if there had been a different class of men controlling our affairs at that early period—if our fathers had been men without large intelligence and christian sympathy, and self-denying devotement of their comparatively

limited property to the public good, the very superior privileges in education and in religion which this town so long enjoyed would not have existed.

The increase of population and of all kinds of business which followed the successful American Revolution was accompanied by a large addition to the wealth and comfort, and I may add, the luxuries of the people. They began to build comparatively elegant houses. During the revolution the log houses had begun to give way to substantial frame dwellings. The first two frame houses erected are still standing—the one now occupied on Main St., by Mr. Waterman, and the other the Smedley house. It is said that so many men were absent on the battle field that the women of the settlements were obliged to assist in raising the frame of the first, while in the following year Mr. Smedley was assisted in the same work by his neighbors of Bennington. The roof of the latter was no sooner in place than the house was crowded in every part by families flying from the terrors which darkened the whole region north and west of us, as the cloud of war rolled on from Canada to Lake George and Saratoga.

Among the elegant private residences which arose here not long after the revolution, were those now occupied by President Hopkins, by Daniel Dewey, Esq., and by Mr. John Cole. The principal public buildings were the west college, the Mansion House and this church. The first meeting house was built by the Proprietors in 1768, and was occupied as a house of worship until 1798. The old church was removed farther back and stood for many years almost immediately opposite the present residence of Dr. Sabin, and was used as a Town Hall. The list of subscribers to the new house has been preserved and shows the spirit of our public men—the highest subscriptions being 100 pounds and the average 50 dollars. The building itself was in a very high style of church architecture and was built in the most substantial manner—according in fact with the best residences of the most prosperous men connected with the congregation.

I am inclined to think too that the beautiful church edifice was not an unfair representation of the improved religious spirit of the people. Three years after our first Pastor's death in the cause of American Independence, the Rev. Seth Swift was installed as his successor. He was a man of God, eminent for his love of the truth and his devotion to the duties of his high office.

He is described as "warm and open in his temper, evangelical in his religious views, serious in the general tone of his intercourse with his people, decided in his opinions, and prudent and energetic in his measures." During his pastorate large accessions were made to the number of communicants, and the people of the town were brought under the power of a much higher christian life. I have heard my own father and mother, who made a profession of religion under his ministry, describe some of the scenes of that great revival of religion which lifted the church up into the very atmosphere of Heaven and gathered so many scores of all classes and ages into the fold of God; taking religion itself out from those dead forms into which it is ever sinking through the unbelief and worldliness of fallen men, and making it a living power and a constant joy in the heart. It can never be forgotten that while such men as James Richards and Samuel I. Mills and Gordon Hall and others were here praying into existence the American Board of Missions, they themselves were receiving some of their holiest impulses from this church while imparting to it through their most intimate and constant fellowship with its members their own enlarged views and sublime purposes. Gordon Hall was indeed converted here, having united with this church on confession of his faith in 1806, and it was in such circumstances that he joined that holy band who gathered under the haystack for prayer. The next year, i. e., in 1807, and after a ministry of nearly 28 years, the following sad and yet triumphant entry was made in the Records of the church respecting its Pastor.

"February 15, 1807, at about 9 o'clock, A. M., Rev. Seth Swift, our much esteemed, dearly beloved and very faithful and laborious Pastor, died in the midst of great usefulness, while God was pouring out His spirit here and giving him many seals of his ministry."

The revival was not checked by the death of the Pastor, but continued to move on with solemn and majestic power under the ministrations of President Fitch, who supplied the Pulpit over six years, the church seeming truly to comprehend its great mission on earth and especially to manifest its deep and cordial sympathy with those early and sublime movements which under the guidance of the "missionary band" in the college contemplated the subjection of the whole world to Christ. This church became from that time a missionary church.

In the summer of 1813, the Rev. Walter King, a graduate of Yale College, and who had already been a Pastor in Norwich, Conn., for twenty-four years, was installed over this church. In an obituary notice of him published in the "Panoplist," he is described as a "sound divine, a solemn and searching preacher, and eminently a man of prayer." His ministry here was very brief but characterized by a tone of humble piety and of gentle purity of life, which render his memory very fragrant and pleasant to those who knew him. He was suddenly attacked with apoplexy while conducting the ministrations of the pulpit, and survived but a few hours after being carried to his home. His widow long remained among us, and if her cotemporaries could testify to-day of her character, there would be but one voice in relation to the sweetness of her christian spirit, and the meekness and fortitude with which she bore the trials of her protracted widowhood.

In this connection I cannot refrain from mentioning the names of some of those remarkable christian women who for so many years gave tone to the social life of this town, and who by the labors of their fingers and the hospitality of their tables, and their large gifts in money, were ever helping on some candidate for the sacred office, and sending their well-stocked boxes to the missionaries in distant lands. There were many such. The church will never cease to praise God for them, while our constant prayer should be that their daughters may walk in their steps so far as they followed Christ. Among them we remember particularly Mrs. Mehitabel S. Bardwell, to whose house the missionary prayer meeting was transferred from the haystack, and where on Saturday evenings so many candidates for the missionary field gathered for prayer;—and Mrs. Ruth Benjamin, to whose house the same meeting was transferred when the infirmities of age no longer permitted Mrs. Bardwell to receive them, and who before she herself departed to glory had the honor and happiness of seeing her son and her granddaughter going forth as active laborers in the foreign missionary cause; and the two Mrs. Whitmans, whose names are associated with every good enterprise in the town and church and college—every Tuesday evening, for a score of years, witnessing their rooms crowded with those who loved to pray, and every year testifying to their cheerful gifts of hundreds and sometimes of thousands of dollars to the church, to home and foreign missions and to the beloved college. Who

can ever forget the holy repose and joyful hope with which the eldest of these two sisters awaited the coming of her Lord—rejoicing in the exalted christian character of her son Seymour Whitman, Esq., who was one of the strongest pillars of the church from early manhood to the day of his death, and who all too soon for the church and the town followed his mother to the world of glory.

And there was Mrs. Deacon Skinner whose house was the home of a bright and cheerful hospitality, where the young people met such a cordial welcome and the old people found their spirits quickened by her genial wit and hearty good will. How quick was her step, and how full of grace her manners, and how unvarying her faith in God her Saviour though suffering so many years the bereavement of widowhood and though left childless amid the infirmities of extreme old age; and how hard it was to believe that we could get on as well without her, even when the Lord called her in her ninety-fifth year to Himself.

I may mention also the names of Mrs. Professor Kellogg and Mrs. Jesse Sabin and Mrs. Daniel Noble and Mrs. Gershom T. Bulkley and Mrs. Solomon Bulkley and Mrs. Keyes Danforth and Mrs. Robbins Bulkley and Mrs. Samuel Bridges and Mrs. Lyman Hubbel and Mrs. Christopher Penniman and Mrs. Eliza Noble Brewster These are only a part of those who were most prominent and active in every good work—and you will pardon me for saying that next to seeing my own dear mother's name in the early records of the church, I glory in finding it year after year in the Missionary Herald as treasurer of this consecrated band of christian women sending their gifts to the end of the world.

The ordination and installation of the Rev. Ralph W. Gridley are among my earliest recollections in connection with the church. I think of him in the sick room and at the funeral of my young brother William, and afterwards performing the same duties for my grandmother Noble. I remember his fervent appeals in the conference room and in the pulpit, and I cannot forget that he laid his own gentle hands upon my head when I was ordained in this pulpit. To-day, as I attempt to gaze through the mists of more than thirty years, there rises before me his light form, with his person so neatly and modestly attired, his manners so simple and sincere, and his piety so deep and ardent. In the pulpit, though he stood in the shadow of some of the most eloquent and successful

of American preachers, yet by the people of his flock his remarkable fluency of speech, and his sermons full of the Holy Scriptures and of a rich christian experience, were ever appreciated. He was the first to detect any new pulsations of spiritual life in the church, while his heart leaped to meet any response from inquiring souls to his solemn appeals. How tender was his regard for the poor of his flock, and how welcome in the chambers of the sick and the dying! Who among the bereaved ever failed to hear from his lips the words of Heavenly consolation? How untiring were his labors as he went from one district to another of his charge and how many scores and hundreds were gathered by his faithful toil into this happy fold. During his pastorate of nearly 18 years over 600 persons were received into the church, being an average of more than 30 a year.

The attractions of a new field in the enterprising West, whither some of the most faithful and efficient of his flock had already gone, and where, free from a theological controversy which was then shaking so many of our souls, he hoped for still greater usefulness, finally separated him from this charge. Though successful in his new home in Illinois, his heart still lingered among these scenes. But the Master had higher service than could be found in the church on earth, and he was soon transferred to the companionship of Angels and the reward of the faithful. His ministry of so many years will ever remain a bright and memorable period in the history of this church, while its fruits will not cease to be gathered here for many generations yet to come.

But while this church was ever by its pastors and membership a source of pure and powerful influence, I desire to recognize the vital connection which in all these years ever existed between the church and the college. While the college gave distinction to the town, it imparted to the church through its eminent President and Professors, and its choicest young men, the very elevated tone and enlarged views by which they were distinguished. Who can estimate the value of such princes among good and strong men as Presidents Fitch and Griffin? The first was indeed the acting Pastor of the church for more than six years. In a letter written some months after Mr. Swift's decease, President Fitch writes to a friend, "I have preached about fifty sermons here, besides all the cares and distresses which have attended me in my family and discharging all my college duties. Scarcely time has been left me to

take my necessary food and rest, and I am still involved in this scene of constant care and labors,—too much for any one man to perform." It was in this manner that he continued to labor, and the constant revivals that blessed the church from 1805 to 1813 were felt in the college in such power that a large number of the students were converted and brought into the ministry—among them Gordon Hall, the first of our missionaries in character as well as in time, the Rev. Prof. Chester Dewey, and the Rev. Charles Jenkins.

It is worthy of remark that these revivals beginning in the church never failed to reach the college. They were in fact one —heart beating responsive to heart—and all feeling that the conversion of a young man in college not only saved a soul from death, but ordinarily raised up a new ambassador for Christ, and perhaps a missionary of the cross.

The same state of things existed during the Presidency of Dr. Griffin. From the very beginning, he felt identified with the church in all its efforts, and co-operated with it in the most earnest and efficient manner. For several years he filled this pulpit half of the time, our Pastor preaching every third Sabbath in "Southpart," and on the other Sabbath enjoying with us those wonderful discourses which had electrified Boston in former years, and which shall ever remain an imperishable monument of pulpit eloquence. During those great revivals which he was wont to say "saved the college," there seemed indeed to be no limit to his power of endurance or to the zeal which in the winter vacation sent him forth into our streets visiting from house to house, beseeching men to be reconciled to God. Who of us who heard them can ever forget that course of Sabbath evening sermons in the old white school house, continued through several months, and accompanied by constant conversions and the increased christian strength of the scores of young converts who hung entranced upon his lips? In the history of this church and college in all coming time, the names of Presidents Fitch and Griffin will stand out not only on the marble in the college cemetery which so appropriately records some of their virtues, but in letters of immortal beauty on the souls of those connected with this church who have gone forth to their life work under the inspiration which they here received.

Another man associated with them both in christian toil and in sympathy with the church was Prof. Chester Dewey. How ten-

der was his heart. How cool and discriminating his judgment. How much in advance of his time, when, in 1823, he organized the young men of college into a society for the abolition of Negro Slavery! He was a man who with amazing power mingled a divine philosophy with his lectures and experiments in the lecture room, and by the keenness of his wit and the pertinency of his anecdotes fastened truth immovably in the soul. I shall never forget the time when at the close of a lecture on chemistry he told us the story of Bruce and the spider, and applied it to us in the great matter of securing for ourselves the crown of life. On the Sabbath day he not unfrequently stood in this pulpit and poured out from his full heart such solid sentences and paragraphs of christian doctrine, and with such fullness and pathos in his solemn and yet winning voice, that its tones are still sounding like Heaven's trumpet in my ears.

And can we pass over another name—Prof. Ebenezer Kellogg, who lingered so long among us, and whose gentle virtues shone only brighter and brighter with the advancing years! How exact was his knowledge, how pure his taste, how observant of those little things which make up so large a part of the realities of life. How noiseless was his tread as he went about busier and more anxious for others than for himself. If a spring were loose in the machinery of college or the church or town was he not the first to detect it, and the most resolute and patient though the most unostentatious to remedy the wrong? How persistent and faithful for many years as Superintendent of the Sabbath school, and how devoted to all the interests of the town and church as well as the college. And when his gentle hands were finally paralyzed in death, how many threads were soon tangled that his fingers had so skillfully guided, and how many props fell down that he had so long kept in their places. His memory will be green here when the row of beautiful elms, extending from the church to west college, which he planted with his own hands, shall in the coming centuries be dry and dead with age and return to the earth which they now shade and adorn.

And among the sad memories which cluster around me in connection with the college, is that of Prof. William A. Porter. His mind, all brilliant with the learning of the ancient and modern classics, his person so attractive for its manly beauty, and his manners so full of refinement and polished grace, seemed to be but a

shining mark by which the great Archer, Death, might guide more surely his resistless arrow. When we laid him away in the darkness of the tomb, it seemed to me that the world was shrouded all over in a pall of mourning; and if it had not been for the bright hopes of the immortal life which illumined his last hours, life itself would have appeared to me not worth living.

And should I forget the name and character of another so well and so long known among us in college and in this church, Prof. Edward Lasell? Though I was one year in advance of him in college, yet I was very intimately associated with him there for three years, and afterwards we were brought into still closer fellowship as Tutors. We became earnest inquirers on the subject of personal religion at the same time, and stood side by side in the public confession of Christ in this church. He was the first scholar in his class, and when he was made a Professor in the college, his lectures were said to be very brilliant and attractive to the successive classes who enjoyed them. He was a thoroughly honest and upright man, and in all his relations to the church and town he was eminently faithful and useful. He was stricken down in the fullness of his manhood, but his memory is still enshrined in all our hearts.

And in connection with these and other just men, whose spirits are now in Heaven, what thoughts of past holy Sabbaths rush upon us—those old still days when the people came forth from all these surrounding hills, and wound their way along so reverently on foot, on horseback, and in every variety of wagon and carriage, single and double, going up like the tribes of old to the temple of God. And when they reached the village all the church goers there hurried from their houses; and then as the bell began to toll the students might be seen crowding the gravelled walk and hurrying up the steps of the church to their place in the gallery, and to the four large pews assigned them below. How reverently the families stood up in their places when the minister made the prayer of invocation. Then when the opening hymn had been read the choir arose, fifty strong, extending around three sides of the gallery, the choicest of our young men and maidens mingled with those of graver years, and pouring forth the grandest strains of that old music which has not been improved by all the changes with which men have tinkered it, just as they have tried to improve the poetry of the divine Watts and even the Psalms of David himself.

Then there were the conference meetings so full of spiritual life—where the church received and imparted some of its highest holy impulses, and where the deacons magnified their office in prayer and exhortation. And who can forget those venerable deacons of the good old times? The first who held that office are indeed but dimly seen through the shadows of the past. Deacon Wheeler and Deacon Meacham passed away long before our remembrance; though we can never forget the son of the latter, whose sweet voice led us in our sacred songs, and whose meek and holy life was such an honor to the church, and whose grandson, Capt. Meacham, now holds with a firm grasp the pleasant old home. And Deacon Stratton who was so mighty in the Scriptures, living before the days of popular commentaries; and who by comparing scripture with scripture, and especially by taking the Old Testament as the divine key of the New, unlocked the treasures of the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

And Deacon Ford who by his pure and quiet life at home where amid peculiar domestic trials he trained his family for God, and by his fidelity as an officer of the church for so many years illustrated the virtues of a good and holy man, and left the impress of his excellence on the church and on his children and children's children who are to-day with us.

And Deacon Skinner! Is there one of those who once knew him who cannot now see him as he stood up to pray for Zion? his voice gradually rising to a shrill and trembling note and then breaking into tenderness while the tears came coursing down his venerable cheeks! How clear and strong were his views of christian truth, and how firmly he stood here as a pillar in the temple of God. How pleasant it is to know to-day that while his three younger sons attained to honorable positions in the profession of law and were all like himself officers in the church of Christ, his three eldest sons also around whom his deepest anxieties were gathered, did for many years before their death exhibit a character unstained by vice, and proved to the world the blessings of that covenant which secures the favor of God to the children of good men after them.

And is it proper for me to omit in this record of the past my own venerable father? He always seemed to me to have many thoughts and cares for the kingdom of God to one for himself and his more immediate temporal interests. Living in compara-

tive independence and leisure on the estate inherited from his father, he spent much of his time in reading Edwards and Emmons and Baxter and William Mason and Doddridge and Thomas Scott, and in watching over the interests of the church and the town—using the office of a deacon well in guiding the erring and stirring up the good, and proving himself a useful citizen and an upright Justice by turning lawsuits into arbitrations, while he himself set the example of kind forbearance towards unfortunate debtors by making it a rule during his long christian life never to sue a man for debt. His children all knew and deeply felt that he was a holy man living not for this but a better world, and that what he most desired for them was not wealth or position but character and usefulness.

And Deacon Smedley—the descendant of that Capt. Smedley whose name heads the list of the first settlers of the town. He was a man as firm in his opinions as he was upright in his life; as tenacious of the "old ways" of doctrine and measures as he was attached to the Bible and every thing good and true. He loved his closet and the quiet of his own home too much perhaps in his last years, though his regularity and punctuality in coming to the public worship of God were so established for three-score years that when his well-known carriage made its appearance in the village all the people knew that it was time for them to go to the house of God. His mantle has fallen upon his two surviving sons, one of whom, James Smedley, M. D., is now so acceptable and useful in the office of deacon so long held by his honored father. A son of the fourth generation from the settlement of the town now cultivates the ancestral acres which have never passed out of the possession of the family and are increasing in beauty and fertility with the passing years. May the Hoosic as it continues to roll through those rich meadows see no stranger with another name walking as lord upon its banks and gathering the rich harvests there from year to year. Let there be one sacred place left among us where the proprietor can say "here my fathers from the beginning lived and died before me."

And Deacon Taft who answered so well the inspired description of this important officer in the christian church, "grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience," "ruling his children and his own house well" and "having used the office

of a deacon well purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." His oldest son is a Ruling Elder in a Presbyterian church, and his youngest, C. R. Taft, is and has been for many years the Postmaster of our town.

And there was Deacon Stephen Smith of the Baptist church —a true yoke fellow of these good men, though differing from them on this one point of the ordinances of the church. How bright was his flashing eye! and how strongly marked were the lines of his intelligent face. He could construct and bind together an argument as firmly as he could weld the iron which he took from his glowing furnace and laid upon that old anvil by the side of which he stood and toiled so many years. But though he worked in iron with his hands his heart was ever laying up the choicest treasures of golden truth. His integrity no one doubted. His purity of life never lost its brightness. His sons grew up around him bearing his image and three of them are now preaching the gospel which their father so much loved; and his daughters are remembered by us as among the chief and sweetest singers in our choir. The old shop in Water Street has passed away and its occupant has long since turned back to dust and the family are all scattered over the land—but his character shines on in unchanged lustre as we to-day gaze back into the past.

As we turn away from this brief sketch of those who have been office bearers in the church will not all their descendants join me in saying with the beloved Cowper:

> "My boast is not that I derive my birth
> From loins enthroned and rulers of the earth;
> But higher far my proud pretensions rise
> The child of parents passed into the skies."

The Baptist church of which Mr. Smith was a deacon, was first organized about thirty years after the settlement of the town and included in it several "members from Hancock, but was always small and was dissolved in 1811." Three years subsequently another Baptist church was formed, and uniting with the members of the Congregational church residing in "Southpart" they together erected a very neat and comfortable meeting house—the Pastor of the Congregational church occupying that pulpit every third Sabbath and the Baptists the other Sabbaths. But few in number and scattered over a large extent of country they have ever found it difficult to sustain the regular and stated preaching

of the gospel. At present they have no public meetings as a church, finding it more expedient with their feeble numbers to unite in the services of the Congregational and Methodist churches in the different parts of the town.

And this brings us to consider the many changes that have taken place in Williamstown during the last third of the century now under review.

To those of us who come back as I do after an absence of between 30 and 40 years, these changes are very great and striking. An entire generation has passed into the grave. The gray heads and venerable forms that we once saw in this church and passing up and down these thoroughfares are here no more. They lie in row after row in the graveyard sleeping their last sleep, and the names of not a few are actually forgotten or unknown by those who have taken their places. The old church itself is here. It has indeed in the interior put on a new and more modern look. The lofty arched ceiling, the massive pillars below the galleries and the gracefully fluted columns above supporting the roof, the pulpit perched up so high against the wall that it cramped the necks of us boys who looked up for any length of time to the preacher, the deacon's seat at the foot with its fixed communion table, and the great broad aisle in the centre where so many of all ages in our successive and glorious revivals stood up so reverently and to the joy of the church to make their public confession of Christ and enter into covenant with His people, the dear old square, roomy pews where we sat surrounded by those we most loved and where the big muffs of our mothers and sisters and their bright foot stoves softened the air of winter around us—these are all gone forever. And doubtless it is well; and we rejoice that those who come after us have a house for God so convenient in all its arrangements and so well adapted to the purposes of Divine worship. Outside we find the old church in most respects as it was from the beginning, though we cannot but miss the graceful and lofty steeple which so wakened the wonder of our childhood and helped to connect the church below with the bright heavens into which the spire seemed almost to penetrate. Even the "Pine Apple" which in after years took the place of the departed spire is now gone. But we are glad to know that it is the purpose of those who have made these modern improvements to restore the ancient glories of the steeple of 1798.

As we pass down the principal street changes meet us on every side. Not only new and pleasant cottages have sprung up on every side, and some of the old houses put on new and in many cases better forms, but new streets have been opened and the population of the village greatly increased. Park street and Spring street sound strangely in our ears—while Water street as it was with its half dozen houses associated with the names of Capt. Town and Dennis Smith and Dr. Towner and Deacon Smith and Deacon Meacham cannot be recognized in the comparatively crowded dwellings that now meet your eyes. The whole empty space between the Green River Bridge and Smedley's hill has been turned into a populous street, while Shattuck's Lane (now "Depot street") is being filled up with houses and bids fair to terminate in a busy village on the banks of the Hoosic. The old quiet stillness of the valley has been invaded and broken up forever by the shrill whistle of the locomotive and a foreign population is beginning to work its way among our hills while their hands are busy in most of our homes.

The East and the West colleges standing as they did on bleak hills where the young maples just then planted gave but small promise of their future beauty, have been multiplied into eleven edifices embowered in groves of full grown trees and surrounded by landscape gardening of rare taste and attraction, while the number of professors and students has been more than doubled and the standard of scholarship made equal to that of many and superior to most of the colleges of the land.

And the changes in church relations have been almost as numerous. At the commencement of the period now under review the Methodist church was just struggling into existence. They were a feeble band meeting in a private house in Water street to whom a circuit rider came once a month, and who assembled for worship more frequently with their brethren in the adjoining town than in this. But with the increase of the population in connection with the enterprising manufacturers of shoes in Water street and of cotton goods at the foot of Main street, and through the christian fidelity and zeal of a few of their leading men, they soon enjoyed the regular ministrations of the gospel and the ordinances which Christ has appointed. The private house was exchanged for a public hall; and as their numbers increased they built their very neat and substantial house which stands at the

head of Water street. The sound of their bell is now heard mingling with that of the Congregational church and of the college chapel calling the people to the worship of God. The number of their communicants has reached one hundred, and a flourishing congregation with Sabbath school and Bible classes is established in that pleasant locality. We welcome them most cordially as a sister church of Christ to the work which our common Saviour has given them and us to do and to enjoy. Holding firmly as they do the great doctrines of a Divine atonement and justification by faith alone in the propitiation for sins made by Jesus Christ, and of the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and of a holy life or the "obedience of faith," we rejoice at their success; and our prayer is that in the new century which now begins they may have the happiness of a most honored instrumentality in building up the kingdom of God among us and throughout the world.

While this accession has been made to the number of churches in this part of the town, the members of the Congregational church, more than fifty in number, residing in "Southpart" as it was called forty years ago, have been organized into the 2d Congregational church, and for many years have enjoyed the regular ministrations of the sanctuary. And following this, the officers and students of the college have established a church of their own, and for several years past have worshipped by themselves in the college chapel. During this same period the Congregational church in North Adams has been constituted—its original membership consisting almost entirely of members dismissed from this church for the purpose. Regular preaching has also been established in Centreville which in former years sent many regular worshippers to this sanctuary. The result of all has been five additional places of worship instead of the one known of old, and this house which was once crowded in every part has an empty gallery; and though the pews are all rented below, yet they are not all filled as in former times. The membership of the church has also been reduced from over four hundred to less than two hundred and fifty—the great reduction having been occasioned by the organization of so many new congregations, and by the emigration of some of the largest families to the far west, while the inroads of death have also done their constant work of exhaustion.

Against these unfavorable influences a succession of faithful and earnest Pastors have labored with more or less success for thirty years:

The Rev. Joseph Alden from July 3, 1834 to Feb. 10, 1836.

The Rev. Albert Smith from Feb. 11, 1836 to May 6, 1838.

The Rev. Amos Savage from Jan. 22, 1840 to Jan. 30, 1843.

The Rev. Absalom Peters, D. D. from Nov. 20, 1844 to Oct., 1853.

The Rev. Henry R. Hoisington (a returned missionary) supplied the pulpit for about three years, and was succeeded by

The Rev. Addison Ballard who resigned his pastorate about one year ago after a most faithful and useful ministry of seven years. Since his resignation Prof. Albert Hopkins has occupied the pulpit most of the time to the present autumn.

During this period of 31 years, 427 persons have been received into the church—of these 115 were by letters of dismission from other churches, and 312 on examination and profession of their faith.

From the church records beginning with 1779 we learn that there have been fifteen hundred and ten persons in connection with the church. At present there are on the church Register the names of 290 persons still nominally members, though I understand a large number of these have removed from the town—leaving between 200 and 250 resident members.

Considering then the frequent changes in the pastoral relation during the last thirty years, and the five new congregations that now assemble in distinct places of worship every Sabbath day, we have reason to congratulate ourselves that our venerable church enters upon the new century with so much vigorous life, her membership still numerous enough to sustain the ministrations of the gospel at home, and to join in the grand and we trust triumphant assault which is about to be made upon the powers of darkness over the whole world.

The first years of the century which we have now reviewed were passed amid the intense excitements which ended in the Revolutionary war. Then came the war itself rousing all the energies of the people and demanding its sacrifices of comfort and treasure and blood. It is said by his descendants that Nehemiah Smedley, whose name is first among the original settlers, not only took his crops of wheat and turned them into bread and

carted it through the wilderness to our army fighting the battles of Bennington and Fort Edward and Saratoga, but that he actually sunk half the value of his farm in his generous gifts to the cause. Doubtless there were others as patriotic though they have left no descendants among us to tell the story of their devotion to the infant nation struggling into life.

The last years of the century have been not unlike those with which it began. A second war of independence has been fought and gloriously won; and we rejoice to-day that the children of such fathers have proved themselves not unworthy of their sires. This town with the church and the college immediately arrayed themselves on the side of the Government in its determination to maintain the life of the nation and to destroy forever that gigantic evil which had ever been our curse, and which in the just judgment of God threatened to be fatal to liberty all over the world. If I could call over the roll of honor to-day how many names would it be necessary to mention! Our dead have been left on many battle fields, and some have returned to us to die of disease contracted in the discharge of their hard duty. Some, like the gallant Col. Paul, have risen to high positions by their distinguished merit; while others, like Chaplain Hopkins, have spent their strength in the hospitals of the sick and wounded, and in holding up the dear old flag on the field of conflict and of victory. Some of our daughters like Mrs. Mary Bardwell Marsh have first given up their sons to the cause, and then followed on like ministering angels to care for the suffering in hospital wards crowded with the sick and dying soldiers. We thank God that it was the privilege of so many among us to share in the sublime scenes of the past four years, while we rejoice together in the just and permanent peace which spreads its blessings on every side.

We ought not to close this history of the church without reminding you that "revivals," or outpourings of the Holy Ghost, have ever been the joyful experience of the Williamstown church, and the grand source as well as proof of her constant vigorous spiritual life. The Rev. Mr. Swift died in the midst of a revival which continued through several years, and he added to the church nearly 300 members. After his death the revival continued with delightful results under the faithful ministrations of President Fitch; and the year preceding the installation of Mr.

King, while yet without a regular Pastor, 47 persons were brought into the communion of the church. During the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Gridley there were seven revivals—several of them of amazing power—bringing into the church over 600 members, of whom over 500 were received on profession of their faith. There were two revivals in connection with the labors of Rev. Mr. Savage, during whose pastorate of three years over one hundred were added to the church. During the pastorate of Rev. Dr. Peters 106 were received—most of them during revivals in 1847 and in 1848. The ministry of the Rev. Mr. Hoisington was also signally blessed—especially in 1855—when 50 persons were admitted into the church. So in 1858 and in 1862 under the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Ballard there were gracious quickenings from the Spirit of God by which about 70 persons were added to the church. One result of these revivals has been the introduction of between 30 and 40 young men from those who have first made a profession of their faith in Christ in this church, into the christian ministry.

The history then of the church and the town is well worthy of our remembrance. Our record of the past, though doubtless marked and marred in the sight of God by the great imperfections which belong to our fallen race, is yet one which illustrates the excellence of the christian life and exalts our views of the riches of the grace of God. To-day, through our sons and daughters who have gone out from our dear old home, we are in fact connected with all parts of the land, and even with the distant nations of the earth. Our close association as a town with the college has resulted in the liberal education of more of our young men in proportion to our population than can be found in any other town of our county and probably of our State. I can myself recall the names of seventy-five men who have been sent out from the families of this town to occupy important positions in the learned professions—of these 40 are lawyers, 10 physicians, 21 clergymen, and 3 foreign missionaries,—Gordon Hall, Nathan Benjamin, and Marshall D. Sanders.

A very large number of our daughters have intermarried with members of the different learned professions who were educated at the college, and have thus been taken away to distant homes. One of them, Mrs. Mary Perry Ford, has for almost 20 years been toiling by the side of her distinguished husband in the land of Pal-

estine itself, while a large number have gone to the home missionary fields in the west, and to positions of honor and usefulness in many of the large cities of our own country. In this way the Williamstown church is most intimately connected with every part of the land and her influence extended far and wide on every side. In fact as I review the past history of this church since the establishment of the college here in 1793, I am convinced that no church in the land has occupied a position of greater responsibility; and as events have proved in connection with foreign missions as well as with her own christian life and work, no church has witnessed results of a more cheering and blessed character. "The Lord bare them and carried them all the days of old."

And now in conclusion permit me for a few moments to look into the new century which is opening before us.

This town bids fair to increase in population and in wealth with the number of its years. The whole valley of the Hoosic will be filled with a busy people. All these hills around us looking out upon scenery of unsurpassed beauty and magnificence are destined to be covered with rich villas of returned townsmen and others, who will come to breathe the pure mountain air and enjoy the refined literary society which will gather more and more around the beloved college. The college itself entering upon the new century with a President whose published works have given him a national reputation, and whose known devotion to the Kingdom of God has placed him at the head of the great American Society of Foreign Missions, is destined with its strong corps of experienced Professors and its high standard of scholarship, to still greater enlargement and usefulness. And in the midst of all this church is to stand unchanged, we hope, in its attachment to the Bible and the great doctrines of grace, to revivals of religion in connection with the special outpourings of the Holy Ghost, and to foreign missions as the duty of all christians and the certain hope of a lost world.

And the waves of the great sea will still roll on as they have in the past. They will sometimes be "troubled and cast up mire and dirt." But while

> "The whole round earth is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,"

the tides of human life that shall press their way through these vallies and dash against these hills will still be under the control

of Him who "bare them and carried them all the days of old." You and I will pass away as the drops are exhaled from the crests of the breaking surf, and ascend unseen into the heavens above them. And when our children's children gather here for the Second Centennial may we be able to look down upon them from that world where Time with its cycles of years and centuries gives place to the unchanging bliss and glory of the Heavenly State—AMEN.

ERRATA.

7th page, 13th line from the bottom read "begin" instead of "began"—and on the same page 9 lines below "pyramids" instead of "pyrmids"
14th page, 8th line from the bottom read "origin" instead of "original"
32d page, 11th line from the top read "son" instead of grandson"
35th page, 13th line from the bottom fill up the blank with the word "air"
36th page 13th line from the bottom read "any" instead of "many"
39th page, 12th line from the top read "itself" instead of "themselves"

APPENDIX.

There is ample ground for the belief that Williamstown, no less than the college which bears its name, owes its origin to Ephraim Williams. Having, in 1744, been intrusted with the command of the northern frontiers of the colony, westward from the Connecticut river—he built Fort Massachusetts in the summer of that year, and made it his headquarters, and was thus made acquainted with the Valley of the Hoosac. His quick eye could not fail to mark its beauty and attractiveness as a place of settlement. There are sufficient indications, in the public records, that it was owing to his representations, made to the leading men of the western part of the Province, with whom he had acquired great influence, that the General Court, in the winter of 1749 passed the following order:

In House Reps. Apr 18, 1749.

Ordered, That Col. Dwight & Col. Choate with such as the Hon. Board shall join be a committee to repair to the Province Lands near Hoosuck, as soon as may be, with a skilful surveyor and chainmen under oath, and lay out two Townships of the contents of six miles square, in the best of the land and in as regular form as may be, joining them together, and return a correct plat of said Townships to this court for their further order thereon. And also to return the course and distance said Towns bear from Fort Massachusetts.

This order was concurred in by the Council, and Oliver Partridge, Esq., was joined to the committee on the part of that body.

The manner in which the committee discharged their duty is set forth in their report made on the 10th of Nov. following, by Oliver Partridge, their chairman. It was as follows, to wit:

Towns v. 115, p 532.

The com. appt'd by the Great & Gen Court in April last to repair to the Province lands near Hoosuck to lay out two Townships of the contents of six miles square &c Report—

That on the 26 day of October the com. went from Hatfield, and the next day came to Fort Mass—(having obtained Mr Nathaniel Dwight a skilfull Surveyor to

survey the Townships) The next day we went out to view the lands, ordered th surveyor to measure the distance from the fort to the line that is run between this Government & New Hampshire (which was run some years since by Mr. Hazzen) and on Monday & Tuesday following we proceeded to view the lands. In the meantime directed the Survr to take the courses & distances of ye adjacent mountains, and when we had sufficiently satisfied ourselves in what form the Townships be laid out, we directed the Survr to lay them out agreeable to the plan herewith presented (Having caused the Surv & chainmen to be sworn.)

As to the quantity of intervale contained in the townships, we made no particular measure thereof by the survey, but carefully viewed the townships and would inform that the land on the river, running through the centre of the East Township for more than 4 miles northerly and southerly about half a mile East & West appears rich & good, a considerable part thereof is intervale.

In the West Township there is no so great quantity of Intervale, but a very valuable and rich tract of land in the middle of the Township, insomuch that the com. do deem the West Township the most valuable.

Great part of the land in both townships is considerably loaded with timber.

As to the quality of lands adjoining sd townships the Com. would inform that on the East of sd Townships lie the Great Hoosuck Mountain (so-called) which is about 7 miles from side, on which mountain there is a sufficient quantity of land for a township or two—a great part of it is valuable—On the West side of the West town lays a range of mountains, and between the two townships lays another range of mountains over which the dividing line runs—Between the North line of the East town and the Province line the land is mountainous and broken—and the land on the south of sd town is—some very poor and some of it good and accommodable for settlement.

All which is humbly submmitted in the name and by the order of the Committee.

OV. PARTRIDGE.

Nov. 10. 1749.

In council Dec. 8. 1749 Read & sent down.

At the next session, January, 1750, the settlement of the townships thus laid out was under the consideration of the Legislature, and the result was the adoption by both branches of the following orders:

In Ho. Reps. January 17, 1749 (1750 New Style.)

Voted, That Col. Miller and Capt. Livermore with such as the Hon. Council shall appoint be a com. to lay out 63 house lots in the Westernmost Township (Each house lot to draw one sixty third part of sd. Township) one for the first settled minister, one for the ministry, and one for the school, as near the centre of the Township as may be with convenience, the said lots to contain 10 or 12 acres each as the Com. shall best judge—said house lots to be adjoining—and also that said Com. be directed to lay out such Highways, streets and lanes to and amongst the house lots as shall be necessary and convenient, and that said Committee have power to admit sixty settlers or inhabitants into said Township—each of them shall be entitled to one sixty third part of said Township upon the conditions following viz.—That each settler pay the Com. upon his being admitted, £6. 13. 6 Lawful money for the use of the Government, and that he shall within the space of Two years from the time of his being admitted build a house 18 feet long, 15 feet wide and seven foot studd, and shall fence five acres of his said house lot and bring the same to English grass, or fit it for plowing and raising of wheat or other com., and

shall actually by themselves or assigns reside on said house lot five years in seven from the time of their being admitted—and that they do settle a learned Orthodox minister in said Town within the term of five years from the time of their being admitted—And in case the aforesaid conditions are not fulfilled, according to the true intent and meaning thereof—that then such settler or settlers' right shall be forfeit and revert back to the Province to be disposed as the Gen. Court shall and may hereafter order and determine—any thing in their grant to the contrary notwithstanding.

And that the sd Com. be further directed to take a bond of each person by them admitted as a settler of the penal sum of fifty pounds money payable to the Province Treasurer or his superiors in sd office for the faithful performance of the conditions of sd grant—the sd Com to make report of their doings—and due return of sd bonds to the Province Treasurer as soon as may be—who shall be paid for their service out of monies received of the settlers—And as to the Easternmost Township to be settled as the Gen Court shall order. Sent up for Concurrence.

THOS. HUBBARD, Speakr Pro Tempore.

In council Apr 6. 1750

Read and Concurred and James Ninatt Esq is joined in the affair. Saml Holbrook Depy Secretary

Consented to S. Phipps.

The committee entered upon their work without delay. Sixty-three lots, fourteen rods wide, were laid out on each side of a broad street running from Green River to Hemlock Brook, and a portion of them disposed of in 1761—many of them to officers and soldiers in Fort Massachusetts—as appears from the following petition of Capt. Williams, presented to the General Court in Feb., 1750 (1751 New Style), and the order of the Court thereon

Feb. 1750—Petition of Ephm Williams Commander of Fort Massachusetts:

Most Humbly showeth that your petitioner hath been detained in Boston ever since ye last of Nov. past waiting for money due to him and Company out of the Province Treasuary for which he hath his warrants duly executed But there being no money in the Treasury for the payments of them, he must either wait longer (which is very expensive) or return home without; ye later of which will be very Detrimental (as also the former hath been) by reason that fifteen of the Lotts in ye land to the westward of sd Fort Massachusetts, an (by the Committee appointed for the sale of them) virtully Bargained to some of his soldiers upon conditions they speedily pay what they bargained to give, which they (foremost of their money due aforesd) are unable to do and so consequently must lose them, and as that would be a great disappointment, therefore your petitr Humbly prays Your Honr and Honrs would direct the Comee aforesd to take ye warrants above mentioned into their own hands, they advancing the Contents of them to your Petitr, which will not only enable sd soldiers to pay for sd Lotts, but Save your Petitr a vast charge, which he humbly hopes your Honor and Honors in your known wisdom will do and as in duty bound will ever pray—signed E. Williams Jr—(own hand)

House Reps. Feb. 7, 1750.

Read and Ordered that the Comee for admitting settlers in the West New Township at Hoosuck, be and they hereby are directed and impowered out of the monys

which they shall receive from the said Settlers to pay the within named Williams the money due on said warrants—He delivering the sd committee with proper orders on the Treasurer to discount the same with them.

And the said committee are also allowed to admit as many of the Soldiers at Fort Massachusetts, as Settlers as they shall judge proper. Sent up for concurrence. T. HUBBARD Spkr.

Concurred—Consented. T. Phipps.

Deposition of the proprietors who purchased lots with the intention of settling on them, together with other persons who had purchased of original grantees and commenced work in the new township. But as yet no provision had been made for their legal organization as a "Propriety" as it was called. The following petition, presented in Sept., 1753, informs us of the time and manner of securing the proper legislation for that purpose:

To His Exelly William Shirly Esqr Captain General &c., the Honble his Majisty's Council, and House of Representatives in General Court assembled Sept. 1753.

The Petition of us the Subscribers in behalf of ourselves and Others, Proprietors of the West Hoosuck Township at Hoosuck, Lately sold by the General Court Humbly Sheweth

That the General Court was pleased to open the sd Township and lay out the House lots under the Direction of the Courts Comtee, and the Proprietors owners of said lots an divers of them at work upon them and bringing forward Settlements; but upon advisement find they are incapable of Calling and Holding meetings, without the Aid of yr Excelcy and Honours which are exceedingly want in order to agree upon the building a Meeting House, Setling a Minister, Making Division of other Lands and to do and Transact all such matters and things as may be necessary and proper for proprietors of New Townships to do. We therefore Humbly pray yr Excelr and Honurs to appoint some proper person to call a Meeting of said proprietors for such purposes as may be necessary and direct a method of calling meetings of said proprs in the future, and as in duty bound shall Ever pray &c.

	ISAAC WYMAN
ELISHA HIGGINS	ALLIN CURTISS
SILAS PRATT	DARIUS MEAD
TYRAS PRATT	SETH HUDSON
GIDEON WARRIN	THOMAS TRAIN
EZEKL FOSTER	EBENR GRAVES
	ELIHU CURTISS

In the House of Representatives Septr 10. 1753

Read and Voted that Israel Williams Esqr one of his Majs Justices of the Peace for the County of Hampshire Issue his Warrant for calling a meeting of the proprietors of the West Township at Hoosuck so called Directed to one of the principal proprietors of sd Township, Requiring him to set up a Notification in some public place in sd Township Setting forth the time, place and Occasion of sd Meeting fourteen days beforehand, which Meeting shall be holden in sd Township, and such of the proprietors as shall be present at sd Meeting are hereby authorized and impowered by a Maj. vote to Determine upon a Division of all or a part of the Lands in said Township not already allotted, also Chuse a Comtee or Comtees to

lay out the same, also to raise moneys to defray the Charges that may arise by means of laying out sd Lands, also for Clearing Highways, as also to Chuse a proprietors' Clerk, Treasurer, Assessors and Collectors and also to agree and determine upon a method of calling meetings of said proprietors for the future.

Sent up for Concurrence
T. HUBBARD Sp'k'r

In Council Sept. 10. 1753—Read and Concurred

THOS CLARK Dep. Sec'y

Consented to W. SHIRLEY.

By virtue of the above provision the proprietors were duly organized, and meetings held, the official record of one of which is still extant.

These hardy pioneers were not permitted long to continue the work of "bringing on" their new settlement without molestation. In the summer of 1754, the settlement at "Dutch Hoossuck" (Hoosic Falls) was broken up by the Indians, some of the people killed and the remainder forced to flee to Fort Massachusetts for protection. The settlers at "West Hoosuck" immediately abandoned the place. Those having families sought shelter at Fort Massachusetts and others returned to their homes.

The following petition for aid, presented to the General Court in October or November, gives an interesting account of their condition, and discloses the names of those who first occupied the town with their families, and thus are entitled to the designation of the "first settlers."

To His Excellency Wm Shirley Esqr Captn Genl and Governor in Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay and &c.

To the Honble his Majestys Council and The House of Representatives in Genl Court Assembled—Oct. 17. 1754.

The Petition of the inhabitants of West Hoosuck—Humbly Sheweth

That upon Survey of the Plan of sd Township and from the information of the Gentn of this Honourable Court that sold us our Respective Lotts we are abundantly Satisfied that the Government designed it for a Barrier Town into which Succour upon any rupture would be thrown, which induced us to take up with Narrow Lotts less than fourteen Rods wide and thereby subject ourselves to the inconveniences of living in a Huddle, also to give moneys for our Land (which the Government has had the Benefit of) which used to be given upon the promise of selling and Large Bonds to the Province Treasurer for Settleing which now lie against us &c. But may it please your Excellency and Hours Such is our case upon the late Alarm we for Shelter ran to fort Massachusetts and are there with our familys who Clutter the Fort, and make our lives and that of the Soldiers very uncomfortable—in this poor Situation your Pettnrs are waiting your Excellencies and Honours Directions how to Bestow our ourselves, and would let your Excellency know there is about ELEAVEN FAMILIES OF US that would gladly Return to our Settle-

ments, and a considerable number more, could we receive proper incouragemt from this Honable Court, Whose Determination we all Humbly wait

And as in Duty bound shall ever pray &c

Signed by

JONA MEACHM
GIDEON WARRIN
BENJ. SIMONDS
OLIVER AVERY
THOMAS TRAIN
SETH HUDSON
WILLIAM CHIDESTER
EZEKL FOSTER
ALLIN CURTISS
JABEZ WARRIN Junr
JABEZ WARRIN

The Government does not appear to have responded favorably to this petition for aid. Col. Israel Williams, the military commander of the "Western Frontier," did not deem it wise to attempt to sustain the new settlement while a French and Indian war was imminent. He advised the settlers to remove their gathered crops of wheat and other effects to a place of safety. A portion of them, of whom Jonathan Meacham was one, entered the service under Ephraim Williams, and were with him in the expedition to Crown Point during the following year. The first evidence of any attempt to renew the work of settlement, is contained in the following petition of William Chidester for aid to erect a block-house—which was presented to the General Court on the 18th of January, 1756:

Province of the Massachusetts Bay { To his Honour Spencer Phipps Esq Commander in Chief in and over His Majesty's province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, To the Honourable His Majesty's Council, and House of Representatives in General Court assembled the 18 Day of Jany 1756

The Petition of William Chidester of the Place called Hoosuck in the County of Hampshire in said Province Humbly Shews:

That your petitioner purchased several lotts of land in the Westerly Township called Hoosuck Townships, which lays about four miles to the westward of fort Massachusetts, and had Removed his family on to said lots In order to Perform the Duties Injoined the several Purchasers of lotts in the said Township, with an expectation that the other purchasers would have followed him to fullfill their obligations on their Respective lotts, and so strengthen the Town, that they might not only Defend ourselves against the common Enimy, but be a Barrier to Province, But so it is that Your Petitioner and Some Others, TO THE AMOUNT OF FIVE FAMILYS are left alone in the said Westerly Township as he apprehends in Emmenant Danger of being Murthered, and their substance destroyed by the Common Enimy, as there is but about five familys between his habitation, and the place Coled Scotohook (Schaghticoke) in the Dutch County which the Indians and French burnt and distroyed the last fall, Notwithstanding our forces were at lake George at the same time. Your Petitioner therefore humbly Prays your Honour and Honours would be Graciously pleased to take his Distrest Condition into your wise Consideration and grant such Releife as in Your great Wisdom you shall see meet. And as in Duty bound shall ever pray WILLIAM CHIDESTER

In House of Representatives, Jany 18. 1756

Read and Ordered, That the prayer of this Petn be so far granted as that the Commander in Chief be disired to give orders, That if the Proprietors of said Township or any part of them shall at their own cost and charge erect a sufficient Block house in said Town, IN THE PLACE CALLED THE SQUARE by the tenth day of March next, that then there be allowed Ten Soldiers, either out of the number now Stationed at Fort Massachusetts, or otherwise by a new Levy as this Court shall judge best: and that the sd proprietors or such of them as shall appear and labour in the Erecting of sd Fort be allowed their Subsistence out of the province stores for the space of two months; and that if the Proprietors shall not appear by the tenth of March next to erect a Block-house on the place called the square, that then the Petitioner with such as shall appear spirited with him, and shall erect a Block-house ROUND HIS HOUSE AND THE TWO OTHER HOUSES CONVENIENT TO BE TAKEN IN, shall be entitled to the same subsistence above sd while building said Block-house, and that when sd Block-house is finished Ten of the Inhabitants which shall have Erected said Block-house be put into pay and subsistence during ye Courts pleasure, and that the Commander in Chief be disired to give orders that there be a Guard of Ten men taken from Fort Massachusetts to guard the Labourers while they are work on sd Block-house

Sent up for Concurrence
T. HUBBARD Spkr

In Council Feb 2. Read and Concurred
THOS CLARK Depty Sec'ry
Consented to W. SHIRLEY.

On the 6th of Feb., Gov. Shirley issued an order in accordance with the foregoing request, authorizing Chidester to build a block-house on the *square* if a sufficient number should join him, so as to complete the work by the 10th of March; otherwise to build around his own and two other houses. Chidester, aided by Benjamin Simonds, Seth Hudson and Jabez Warren proceeded at once to erect the block-house on the eastern line of his own lot, which was the third west or twenty-eight rods from the present Mansion House, on the north side of the street.

Ten men from Fort Massachusetts served as a guard to the workmen from Feb. 29th to March 29th, when the work was completed. Others, who had left the place on the alarm in 1754, returned and aided in the work, amongst whom were Nehemiah Smedley and Josiah and William Horsford.

In obedience to the following order of the General Court, Capt. Wyman, March 23d, detailed five men from Fort Massachusetts under the command of Sergeant Samuel Taylor, to guard the new work, in connection with the men who had built it.

March 9th 1756

Ordered, That there be Forty Men at Hoosuck and no more. Thirty whereof to be posted at Fort Massachusetts, and ten at the West Township, the said Ten at ye West Township to be inhabitants of sd Township, if there shall be so many in-

habitants effective for the service, alwaies including the men that shall have been concerned in building the Block-house agreeable to the vote of this Court of the 28th of Jany last

Dissatisfied with this arrangement, Chidester went to Boston in April and obtained from Gov. Shirley a Sergeant's commission and authority to supersede Taylor in the command of the fort.

Meanwhile a portion of the settlers were not satisfied with the proceedings of Chidester and his friends, and on the 27th of May, Thomas Train in their behalf presented the following petition for aid to build another fort.

To His Honour Spencer Phipps Esq—Lieut Govr and Commander in Chief of His Majisties Province of Massachusetts Bay &c

The Honble His Majisties Council and ye Honble House of Representatives in General Court Assembled—May 26. 1756.

The memorial of Thomas Train of West Hoosuck in behalf of himself and Divers others of the Proprietors of West Hoosuck, Humbly Sheweth:

That your Memorialist and others of the Proprietors of ye aforesaid Township, would with ye countenance and encouragement of ye General Court build at their own proper cost and Charge a Block-house at said place upon the Square so called which will be of special service in order to bring forward a settlement iv said place, and beg leave to Represent that ye Block-house (if it wil bear ye name) built by William Chidester and others answers no good purpose and was erected contrary to the minds of ye Proprietors in general, and as we think contrary to ye design and order of ye Genl Court; therefore your memorialist humbly begs leave to erect a Block-house at ye aforesaid place of ye following Dimensions viz: Eighty feet square, two mounts twenty feet square, with a sufficient Watch Box to ye same—al with Hewn Timber. And that your Honours in your wonted goodness would subsist your memorialists whilst erecting said Block-house and grant them such a number of men to mantle ye same (During their perilous season) as your Honours in your great wisdom shall see best and as in Duty bound shall ever pray.

THOMAS TRAIN

Mit Records Vol 9. p. 882

Attached to said petition is the following subscription, to wit:

Fort Massachusetts May ye 10. 1756.

We the subscribers do promise to pay unto Any Person or persons the several sums subscribed if they will undertake and finish a sufficient fort on the Square in the West Township at Husack so called at the compleat finishing said fort—the Dimentions are as followeth viz. said fort to be 80 feet square with two mounts each 20 feet square, the said Fort to be built of hewn timber and a sufficient Watch Box —and we the Subscribers do promiso to pay the several sums subscribed or to work till we have Compleated the Superscription, as witness our hands—

ISAAC WYMAN	6-0-0	THOMAS TRAIN	3-0-0
BEN SYMONDS	3-0-0	ELISHA HIGGINS	1-10-0
WILLIAM MEACHAM	3-0-0	WILLIAM TRAIN	1-10-0
TYRAS PRATT	1-6-8	JOSEPH HAWLEY	0-18-0
GAD CHAPIN	3-0-0	JONATHAN MEACHAM	2-0-0
JOHN WELLS	3-0-0	DERICK WEBB	0-1-10
NOAH PRATT	1-6-8	JOHN MOFFAT	3-0-0
SAML TAYLOR	3-0-0		

Eight or ten of the above subscribers were settlers. Train was the son-in-law of Simonds, and his descendants are still residents of the town. No response appears to have been made to his petition.

Meanwhile there were rumors of an approaching enemy. The block-house was destitute of artillery and with only ten men as a garrison. Early in June, Chidester went to Boston again, and presented the two petitions which follow, and which, with their signatures, seem to throw light upon the condition of affairs at that time.

Neither of the petitions received any response. Other matters were pressing too heavily.

To his Excellency William Shirley Esq. Capt General, &c, and to the Honble his Majesty's Council, and the Honourable House of Representatives in General Court Assembled.

The Petition of the Proprietors of the West Hoosuck Humbly sheweth,

That whereas ten of the Proprietors of West Hoosuck have obtained Liberty from the Honble Court to build a Fort in sd township with the Incouragement of the Pay and Subsistence of the Province as Soldiers, and as there is allowed forty men for the Defence of the western fronteers at fort Massachusetts and West Hoosuck, fort Massachusetts is a Considerable Part of it fell down and it is Daly expected the rest will fall—and Concluding the Province will Either Rebuild that fort agin or Bild some other for the Defence of the fronteer, your Petitioners Humbly Prays that Massachusetts fort may not be Rebeilt but that we may Have the Liberty of Erecting a fort in our township that shall answer the (same) intent of the Government as that, and that we may have the artillery and the seame strength allowed as was there—and inasmuch as those ten of our Proprietors Have already ben at great cost in Erecting a block-house in town, and Have Don it in such a manner as with some addition will accomadate the whole propriety, your Petitioners Humbly Praieth that we may Have the Like Encouragement allowed us as those ten Have, and we will forthwith join those ten, and by adding other work to the fort allready Built make it a sufficient fort to answer the intent of the Government as a fort instead of Hoosuck fort, which will at once Build up this town & will be as much Defence to the Government and for less Charge, the Determination of which your Pettrs shall wait and as in Duty bound shall ever Pray—

JOSIAH DEAN	ELISHA HIGGINS
SAMUEL KELLOGG	SETH KENT
NEHEMIAH SMEDLEY	JOSIAH HORSFORD
JONATHAN KYLBORNE	JESSE SAWYER
SOLOMON BUEL	ELNATHAN ASHMUN
ELISHA CHAPIN	TYRAS PRATT
NOAH PRATT	ENOS HUDSON
	GIDEON WARRIN

June 9th 1756—presented. Referred to ye next Sitting

Petition of William Chidester.

Boston, June 10. 1756

May it please your Honor,

Whereas there are now two small swivel Guns in Fort Massachusetts unimproved

by said Garrison who are otherwise supplied with Artillery, and the same would be of Singular Service at the Block-house at Hoosuck where they are destitute of any artillery. This is to pray the Favor of your Honours regard to our circumstances in Exigency as to give Orders that the same may be removed from thence to said Block-house at Hoosuck, with ammunition for the Improvement of said Swivel Guns in ease of need. Or otherwise supplyed as your Honour shall judge necessary at this time of Danger. And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray &c

WILLIAM CHIDESTER

To the Honourable Spencer Phipps Esq. Ltt Govr & Commander in Chiefe of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.

Chidester returned to his fort. But his term of service was drawing to a close. On the 11th of July "the block-house was beset by a large party of the enemy," and Chidester, one of his sons and Capt. Elisha Chapin were killed. They were probably surprised without the fort; for it is stated that on the 2d day from the attack, "Capt. Wyman sent twenty men to search for the body of Capt. Chapin, who found him and buried him in a decent manner and returned with his family to Ft. Mass."

Seth Hudson succeeded to the command of the fort, which received considerable accessions of men at various times during the next two years. Ammunition and subsistence were supplied from the older fort, and the work of settling the town went on gradually.

But the principal body of the settlers felt themselves aggrieved at what they conceived to be the stinted and niggardly supplies of men and provisions received from the commander at Fort Mass. On the 11th of January, 1757, they presented to the Legislature a petition for a redress of their grievances. This is herewith given, with the names attached, as a graphic recital of the perils and trials to which they were subjected.

To His Honour Spencer Phipps Esq Lieut Govr &c, The Honourable His Majesty's Council, and the Honble House of Representatives in Gen. Court Convened at Boston

Potition of a number of the Proprietors of West Hoosuck in behalf of ourselves and divers others of the Proprietors of West Hoosuck Humbly Sheweth:

That your Honours Petitioners Have Built a Sufficient Block-house in said township agreeable to the orders of the Government which will be of Special Service in order to bring forward a Settlement in said place if we can but Support our Hold which we trust we Could Well Do, Had we but a little more Strength and a Sufficient Quantity of Stores within our walls. But since we are allowed but Ten men and all our stores to fitch from fort massachusetts or to subsist our Selves without anoy allowance from the Government the matter is somewhat Precarious—for during the Perilous Season the Sumer Past we with our teams was under a Necessity of taking one Part of them and to turn out and go to fort massachusetts once in 14 days for our Subsistence—Nor could we prevail with Capt Wyman to Let us Have

any more than 14 Days allowance at a time and then stay until that was allmost gon before He would Let us Have any more—so that many times we had Had not a Days allowance in the fort at a time when we had Reason to think we sh uld be attacked by the Enemy Daly by the frequent decoveries we made of them.—We have made application to Major Williams as we under Stood He was ordered by the Government to Subsist us, & likewise to Col Isearl Williams and to the Comascary Generel, But all to no purpose as we apprehend, for the Last Stores we went for we Could not Get but 14 Days allowance, and a Number of us Have not Had any bread for three weeks past, only what we are forced to Provide for our Selves. Your Poor Petitioners Humbly Prays that your Honours in your great Wisdom & goodness would Consider our Distrest Circumstances, and if your Honrs in great wisdom can See fitt we Pray that we may be allowed twenty more men to be added to our Number, as we are the most remoat and most Exposed of aney Place in the Government, and that we yr Honrs Petitioners that are not already in the Pay and Subsistence of the government may be some of those that may be put in, and that we may be allowed the Liberty of Subsisting our Selves and be allowed therefor the Seame Consideration that is allowed the Comascrey for Hoosuck, for as there is a number of us Have our familys Hear we must Provide for them, and with a little more expense we could Subsist our Selves also, and could we but obtain leave therefor it woold Be a great Incouragement Settlers to come for it woold Provide a sufficient Store of Provision in the Winter Season, so that we might not be layed under aney obligation of turning out in the Perilous Season—furthermore our allowance is but Small and not Sufficient to live on, for we receive but five lbs and a half of flour for Seven Days allowance of Bread and six pounds and 2 ounces of pork pr week and six gills of rum for Seven days and half a point of pease pr Day wine measure, which is the Whole that we get as allowance, and if aney man is gon from the fort on what ocasion So Ever He Hires His Duty Dono and looses His Subsistance, for notwithstanding a mans Doing His Duty Capt Wyman stopes all his allowance so many Days as He is abcent, and we By no means might be allowed to make Known our Carcumstances to the Honourable Court but our officers Wholy refused us that Liberty, but now at Last we have obtained a furlofe (furlough) for one man, he not knowing our Design, but notwithstanding his furlo He must Hire his Duty Don at the fort and Loose His Subsistance. We furthermore Pray that we might Have an officer amonst our Selves one that would Do us Justice and lett us Have what is allowed by the government and not put it in to his own pocket, thus your Honrs petitioners Humbly beg that your Honours would do for us as in your great wisdom & goodness you see Best, and your petitioners as in Duty bound shall ever pray—

N B All the assertions in the Bove writen Petition Can and may be proved by able witness at the Desire or by order of the Honrble Court—

SAMUEL KELLOGG
NEHEMIAH SMEDLY
JONATHAN KILBORN
SOLOMON BUELL
SETH KENT
ELISHA HIGGINS
JOSIAH DEAN Jr
ELNATHAN ASHMUN
NOAH PRATT
JABEZ WARRIN
JESSE SAWYER
SETH HUDSON
WILLIAM HORSFORD
ISAAC VANARENEM
JOSIAH HORSFORD
JOHN HORSFORD
ISAAC SEARL
TYRAS PRATT
GIDEON WARRIN
WILLIAM CHIDESTER Junr
ARCHELAUS TEMPLE

In House Reps Jan'y 11. 1757—

Read and Ordered, That Mr Lyman and Capt Richardson with such as the Honble Board shall join be a Committee to consider this Petition, to repair to Hoosuck to examine ye state of ye forts there, and consider whether it be most expedient to Repair Fort Massachusetts & to Keep a Garrison there and at the Block-house, or to build anew elsewhere, & that the Comtee inquire into the Facts alleged in the Petition & hear ye parties, and are hereby impowered to take Evidences relative thereto on oath, and report.

Also Voted, That the Ten men stationed at West Hoosuck, as within mentioned, be allowed to Billet themselves at ye charge of the Province until the further order of this Court, provided they do not charge more than five shillings and four pence pr week for each man.

Sent up for Concurrence
T. HUBBARD Spkr

In Council 11 Jany 1757.

Read & Concurred & James Minot Esq is joined in the affair.

A. OLIVER, Secy

Consented to S. PHIPPS—

For some unexplained reason the committee thus appointed did not act, whereupon Hudson, in behalf of the petitioners, on the 22d of April, presented the following:

Province of the } To the Honble his majesty's Council and the Honble House of
Massachusetts Bay } Representatives.

The Petition of Seth Hudson, Humbly Sheweth

Whereas Josiah Horsford, and others, Proprietors and Inhabitants of West Hoosuck, on the 8th. day of Jany last presented a memorial and Petition to this Honble Court, representing their grievances, and praying relief, and the Court was pleased, on the 11th of Jany, to grant us the liberty of Billeting ourselves, and also to appoint a Committee to repair to West Hoosuck, and examine the truth of our Complaint, but it hath so happened that the Committee hath not yet been there—

Your Petitioner humbly prays; That the Committee appointed, or any other Committee, be directed to repair to West Hoosuck, and view our situation and circumstances, which when justly represented to your honours, will we doubt not, meet with due encouragement, as it is the most exposed of any upon the western Frontiers, and the properest place to make a stand against the Enemy—

Your Petitioner as in duty bound shall pray &c

SETH HUDSON
Commanding Officer at West Hoosuck

Boston 22d April 1757

In Council April 25. 1757

Read and ordered that Timothy Woodbridge Esq, of Stockbridge with such as the Honble House shall joyn be a Comtee to take the Petition above referred to into Consideration, Repair to Hoosuck to Examine the state of the Forts there, and Consider whether it be most Expedient to Repair Fort Massachusetts, to keep a Garrison there and at the Block-house, or to build Elsewhere; That the sd Comtee inquire into the Facts alledg'd, hear the Parties, and they are hereby Impowered to take Evidence relative thereto on oath,

Sent down for Concurrence
A. OLIVER Secy

In the House of Reps April 25, 1757

Read and Concurred, and Coll. Morey & Capt Livermore are Joined in the affair

T. HUBBARD S'k'r

Mr. Woodbridge and his associates at once "repaired" to the western frontier, examined into the state of affairs there, and made a full report which is given below together with the action of the General Court thereon.

No artillery had as yet been allowed at the block-house, and a second petition was presented therefor, and also for the services of a chaplain.

Province of the Mass. Bay } To the Honble his Majesty's Council

The petition of Seth Hudson of West Hoosuck, in behalf of the Inhabitants there—Humbly Sheweth:

That the Block-house at W. Hoosuck is, by the continued labors of the Inhabitants made very strong, and greatly improved by additional works, so as to be the strongest Fort on the Western Frontier, well situated for a Barrier, and will probably save in a short time, great charge to the Government by its being in a Township of the finest land in the Province, which will soon fill with People, many of the Proprietors being in Connecticut, and others from that Colony being desirous of settling there; but we are wholly without artillery,

They therefore humbly pray your Honours would grant such a part of the artillery from Fort Massachusetts, with Powder, Shott, & Shells, with other necessarys, as may be suitable for defending the Block-house. And if a Chaplain should be appointed this summer for Fort Mass. we beg we may likewise have the privilege of his preaching with us, a favour we have not hitherto enjoyed, tho but four miles distant from Fort Massachusetts.

Your Petitioner as in Duty bound, shall ever Pray &c

SETH HUDSON
Commanding Officer of West Hoosuck

Presented. May 1757

The artillery in Fort Massa are
3—4 Pounders
1—field piece
2—Swivells
2—Cohorn mortars—

In reply to this request one of the "four pounders," and two swivels, named in the above memorandum, were sent to the block-house.

The Comtee appointed to repair to Hoosuck to examine the state of the forts there and to consider the complaints contained in a petition Exhibited by Sundry persons of West Hoosuck,

Are of the opinion that the fort Called the Massachusetts being placed and built where it is was owing to the want of a better acquaintance of the state, Situation and Circumstances of that part of the province.

The Comtee Humbly conceive that the great ends and designs of the Government in being at the Expense of fortifying and maintaining a garrison there was to promote and bring forward settlements in that expos'd & unsettled part of the province, and to be a protection to such as would bring forward Settlements, and in some measure a defence to the Settlements below, by diverting, discovouring, annoying & giving intelligence of the approach of the Enemy. And if those things were the purpose of the Government the Comtee are of opinion that the said fort is

not so Suitably and conveniently situated to answer those Ends as might be in some other place. For by the best information it appears that the enemies chief gang-way to the western frontiers is about the west part of the west Township. The Comtee upon a carefull Examination of the Condition of the said fort find it much decayed, but still in such condition as may answer for a while the purposes of a garrison without cost to repair it

The Comtee upon a view of the Fort or block-house Erected in the west Township find it a place of considerable strength and tolarable situation, and with some additional building and properly man'd it would be in a condition of being maintained against a considerable force. And altho the fortress is not built on the Square yet it is so near that it will accomodate the Settlers almost as well, and with the addition of Barracks or Stockades from the block-house to the TOP OF THE HILL, ABOUT SEVEN RODS, with a mount at ye end of the said Barracks or Stockades ON SAID HILL, the whole will be as well situated for defence as any place the Comtee could discover.

The Comtee having Examined into the grounds of the Complaints in the said petition committed to their Consideration are of the opinion that the complaints Exhibited in Said petition are well supported Excepting the change of the Subsistence being withheld on all occasions when any soldiar is absent from the fort. For it appeared to the Comtee that when any soldier is sent on an express his Subsistence is not withheld. The Comtee are also of opinion that the adding of twenty more men to the ten at the block-house or fort in the west Township would be of public service.

All which is Humbly submitted
TIMO WOODBRIDGE
SAMUEL LIVERMORE
MOSES MARCY

STOCKBRIDGE JUNE 10. 1757

IN THE HOUSE OF REP'S JANUARY 10. 1758

Read, and Voted, That this report be accepted so far as it relates to Fort Massachusetts and the block-house at West Hoosuck

Sent up for concurrence
T. HUBBARD Spkr

IN COUNCIL JANY 10. 1758
Read and Concurred
A OLIVER Secy

That part of the above report which related to the conduct of Capt. Wyman, the commander at Fort Massachusetts, Maj. Elijah, the commissary, and Col. Israel Williams, the commander of the western department, together with the memorials of each of these officers, were referred to a new committee to make further and more thorough investigations.

A large mass of testimony was taken, including numerous depositions, in support of and in opposition to the complaints of the petitioners; and after a full examination the committee made a report, that the complaints, with one or two exceptions, as to the conduct of Capt. Wyman, were not proved.

But the times of trial and danger for the hardy pioneers of our

town were drawing to a close. The war was soon to be transferred from the banks of the Hoosic and the Connecticut to those of the St. Lawrence. The footsteps of the Indian warrior were no more seen within our borders, and the frontier settlements thenceforward had rest and peace.

CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

The following letters were called forth by the invitation sent abroad by the committee to former residents of Williamstown to unite in the celebration of the centennial. They were not written with the expectation that they would be published. But the committee have thought that the great ends of the celebration would be more perfectly attained by giving them a permanent form in the published proceedings of the day.

12 West 29th Street, New York, Nov. 9, 1865.

Dr. H. L. Sabin,—My Dear Sir:—

Yours of the 6th came to hand last evening. It took us by surprise, but we should be delighted to be with you on the 19th, if it were possible. We have talked it over and tried to make it so, but we are getting old and neither Mrs. Peters nor myself feel quite able to brave the journey at this season, and I am pledged to some other engagements about that time which I cannot well forego. On the whole, we feel obliged to deny ourselves the coveted pleasure.

The occasion, we have no doubt, would be one of great interest to us, as well as to the natives of Williamstown. The thought is a good one, and the selection of Mr. Noble as the Historian for the occasion is admirable. Our hearts will be with you and we shall hope for the best results from so genial a gathering on one of the way-marks of time. Our best love to your family and other friends.

I write by the hand of another, for reasons which you understand, and remain

Very cordially yours,

A. PETERS.

University at Lewisburg, Penn., Nov. 14, 1865.

My Dear Sir:—

Your note informing me of the intended commemoration at Williamstown was was duly received, having been forwarded to me from my late residence. I need not say to you how happy I should be to attend and take part. From the time when I first heard that a celebration was contemplated, I looked forward to it with great pleasure, not allowing myself to doubt that I should be there, if it were physically possible. But my duties here have been too recently assumed and are too engrossing to permit me to be absent at this time. I cannot tell you how greatly I regret this. My heart will be there. I suppose that every thoughtful person has a very special interest in the place of his birth and education. But we may be

permitted to look with no common interest and gratitude upon our old home. The associations that bind our hearts to old Williamstown, I am sure, can never let go their hold. I beg you to convey the expression of my very cordial regards to your colleagues of the committee, and to those—every year growing fewer—by whom I shall be missed.

I remain, as ever, Your Friend and Obt. Serv't,

LUCIUS E. SMITH.

Dr. H. L. Sabin.

Monroe, Nov. 12, 1865.

My Dear Brother:—

I saw in the New York Observer, a day or two since a notice of the centennial celebration in our dear old native town, of its first settlement and the ordination of the first Pastor, and an invitation to all who were born there, now scattered over the broad land, to return and review with them the memories of the past, and unite with them in a prayer meeting on the evening of that day (the 19th instant.) I certainly consider myself as embraced within that call—myself already in the sear and yellow leaf of life—so many years away, I need not tell you what pleasure it would give me to be there and meet you and others, and particularly on that occasion.

One hundred years ago! They must indeed have been a little band, feeble and few, who stood around their Pastor at the laying on of hands upon his devoted head. But they felt the value of that ministry, and of that Book which brings life and immortality to light, and which breathes of that charity which seeketh not her own. One hundred years! The heads of those venerable men who were active in the formation of that church and society have been laid low. To come down within my own recollection, old Doct. Fitch, Rev. Mr. King, Doct. Griffin, Rev. Mr. Gridley, and the Deacons Stratton, Ford, Smedley, Skinner and our own honored father, the Whitmans and other active and intelligent members of that church and society, whose voices have so often been heard at the church conference meetings, and were once so familiar to us, where are they? Each year in its revolution has taken them from our sight, and some who perhaps may yet remain stand bending over the entrance to their final resting place, and soon will glide as shadows from our sight. I love my native town, I love her people, it seems to me like holy ground. It has always seemed to me, that a place where so many grand enterprises have originated, so much prayer been offered, so many good and holy men lived and died, must always be greatly blessed of God. The influences of that church and that college have been felt in the remotest corners of the earth, and given wings to many messengers of peace, who have made glad the hearts of many destitute heathen, and many broken hearted suppliants at the cross. I believe the Pastors of that church have always endeavored to lead their people to the Rock on which they could build for eternity. The descendants of such sires need never be ashamed, or afraid of being left out in the cold. Who would not love to live there, who would not love to die and be buried there, amidst that people, among those hills, and take part with them in the great resurrection? I find it very difficult, my dear brother, to resist that call to prayer from my kindred in my native town. I should love to be there, and mingle my poor prayer with you on that delightful occasion, but the time necessarily spent in going and coming so long a distance involves too much for me to spare at this time. May God be with you and bless you there.

We are all pretty well— my love to all my kindred and friends.

Affectionately your Brother,

CHARLES NOBLE.

Rev. Mason Noble, Williamstown, Mass.

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WILLIAMSTOWN.

We whose names are hereunto subscribed do severally promise and agree to pay unto such persons as a majority of the subscribers shall appoint a committee to receive the same, the several sums set against our names respectively—to be applied to the purpose of erecting a house of public worship on the eminence where the old meeting house now stands in Williamstown. The money so subscribed to be paid at such time or times, and the house to be built of such dimensions and upon such model as the majority of the subscribers shall direct.

SEPTEMBER 26th, 1796.

	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
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Elisha Williams	15-0-0	Abial Hawkins	10 0 0
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